

Childhood Education

TIME TO TEACH

•
Christmas Celebrations

December 1947

JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Childhood Education

*The Magazine
for Teachers
of Children*

*To Stimulate Thinking
Rather Than
Advocate Fixed Practice*

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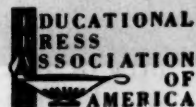
Next Month—

"Class Size, Grouping, and Promotion Practices" will be the theme for the January issue.

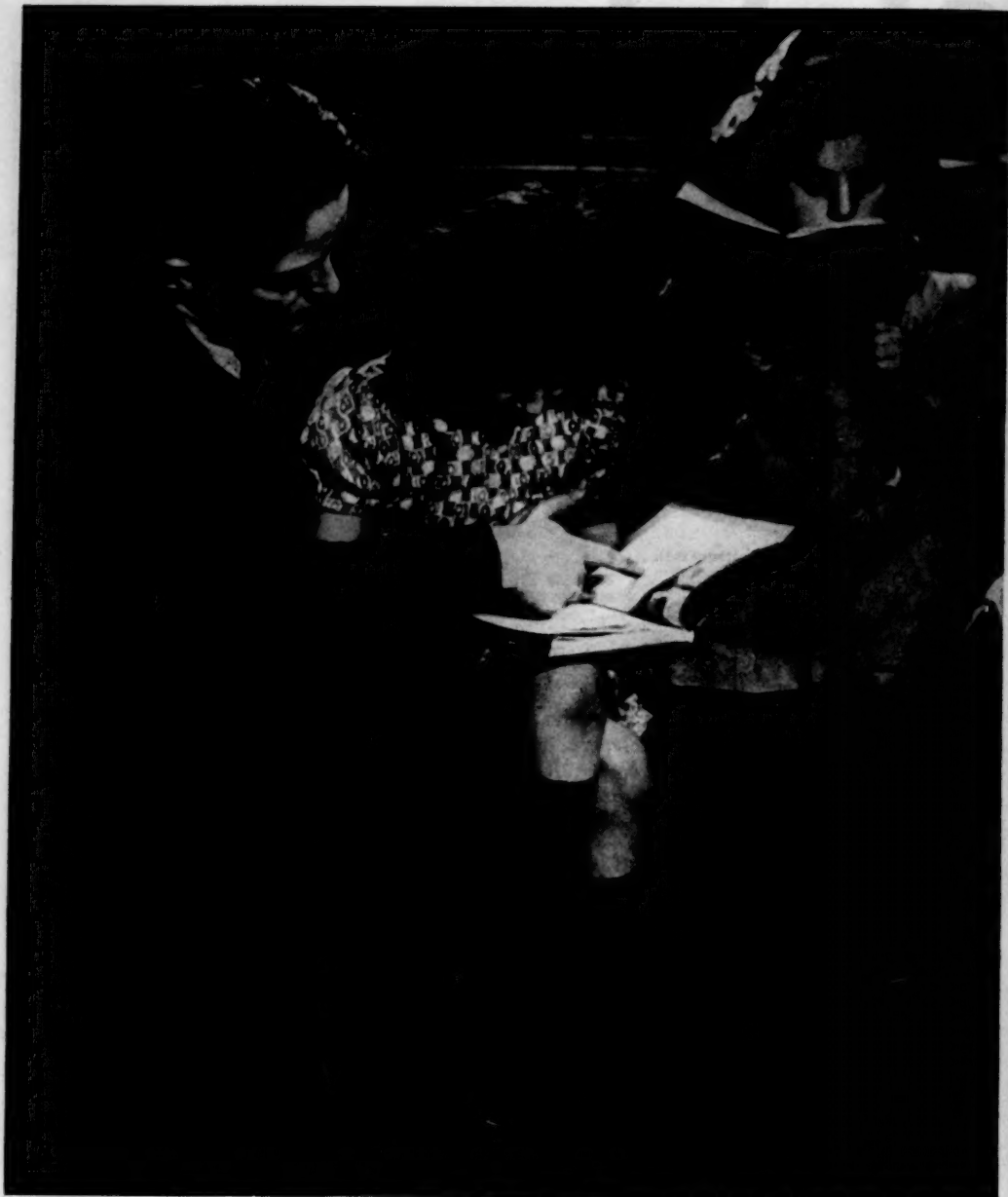
Some aspects to be considered include: how shall children be grouped; group living and learning; leaders are made, not born; culture conflicts and how they may be resolved; how large should a class be, and a description of the primary school plan at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The contributors include: Kenneth Benne, Ruth Cunningham, Lowell Goodrich, Inga Ola Helseth, Marie L. Hughes, Daisy Jones, and Madeline Roberts.

A.C.E. Study Conference registration blanks and the preliminary program for the St. Louis meeting will be a special insert. News and reviews will complete the issue.



REPRINTS—Orders for reprints from this issue must be received by the Graphic Arts Press, 914 20th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., by the fifteenth of the month of issue.



Courtesy Board of Education, St. Louis

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DECEMBER

By WINIFRED E. BAIN

We Do What We Want To Do

"It's smart to have time to do what we think is important to us," says Winifred Bain, president of the Association for Childhood Education and president of Wheelock College, Boston. She shows how time has become a scapegoat, calls for an honest facing of the fact that we do what we want to do, and points out the challenge of time to those who teach children.

THE CLOCK AND THE CALENDAR were invented as aids to orderly living. There is no doubt that they have proved useful for that purpose. At the same time they have introduced an element of strain which is aggravated rather than released by the developments in modern life which the measurement of time makes possible. The march of civilization makes time something to be reckoned with.

Life, as most people live it, holds so many opportunities and demands that the usual person finds himself pushed and harassed. Before he knows it he is using time not as an asset for orderly productive living but as an excuse for his failure to accomplish all that his hand feels it might or should do.

Now looking at the situation honestly we all do what we want to do. Even when there are limitations which we resent we comply with them because of desire to be in the spot that imposes them. And we fulfill their demands. The mother who is too busy with her children to continue the social life, community activity or career which consumed her time before she had a family cares for those children because she wants them to grow up properly more than she wants the other things for which she now has no time. Teachers who find themselves harassed with a multiplicity of demands which prevent them from realizing all they de-

sire and feel they need to do choose from the array the things they most want to do. If they choose to do some things they would rather not just because these things are required, the choice is no less real.

Then why make time a scapegoat? Why not recognize that we do what we want to do and adjust to our limitations or remove them or change our status?

Time Has Become a Scapegoat

One reason is that we are all prone to blame our shortcomings on someone else. The lowest form of this manifestation is blaming the immediate but incidental cause; one's husband or wife who does not understand or appreciate one's sacrifices, the children who do not behave, the school administrator who is really stupid but makes himself out a big shot, and so on.

Just an inch or so beyond this form of scapegoating is the blame which is heaped upon the abstraction of time itself. What I could do if I only had time is the theme. Often we waste more time than it would take to write an immortal ode while tediously recounting how we are put upon. Often we spend as much time and energy explaining why we can't grant a request for constructive service as it would take to do the work.

Another subtle and seldom recog-

nized reason for assuming the role of the pushed and overburdened individual is that such status has prestige. Gone is the applause for the leisure class. The mantle of importance in modern life has fallen on the busy person who by his engagement calendar proves how much he is sought after.

It is true that we haven't enough strong leaders in the world today. Those who can and will carry responsibilities are in a position of over-demand. But one of the smartest things that could be done by present-day leaders would be to turn over responsibilities to others having potentialities and eagerness. The most stupid thing is to accept every post that can be obtained, thus overloading the schedule so that work is superficially done and others who might learn leadership through taking responsibility are obliged to fetch and carry. Yet we are so glad to do it, most of us. It's easier to do so oftentimes.

And then, too, we are hero worshippers. The very person who is so busy that he keeps us waiting, wasting our time, so impresses us with his importance that we emulate his pressures rather than his worthy qualities.

We come to meetings late; we leave early; we resist important urges because we are too busy. Worst of all, we spend precious time recounting all the things we have done and all we have left undone because we are so busy. This is the most frequently used technique for getting prestige that I know. Since it is little recognized for what it is, it works in a large percentage of cases. Who among us has not secretly longed to have a train held for our arrival? And who has not simulated this experience in other ways?

There is much truth in the saying that if you want a thing done ask a

busy person. If the "busy person" is a well-organized individual who knows how to direct his course and how to avoid cluttering his effort he can do more than one less well directed. He finds time to do what he wants to do. Or, he doesn't try and he doesn't waste time in futile lament. He lets prestige go or come as it will.

But here is the place for a sympathetic word about the cluttered days that everyone who is anybody must handle—parents, teachers, artists, citizens—everybody. Junior gets sick just as it is time to can the tomatoes. The community fund drive must be taken care of just as the first grade is ready to be introduced to books. The editor pushes the author for an article just when he has begun his new book. The workmen demand a bargaining session on the very day the industrialist had planned to go to the world series. Any illustration penned in brief is an understatement of what can and does happen in a single day to clutter the best-laid plans.

No matter. In the welter of distractions we still do what we want to do—the thing that has most vital importance to us. Why make time the scapegoat?

What Is Time?

Time is a treasure of great price. Why not look at it in perspective? In the long run despite the frustrations that interrupt our days time allows for growth and development. The very difficulties which beset us as time advances bring us maturity if we cope with them. No matter what happens to distract us we grow in power to work constructively by making time an ally in overcoming distractions.

Time is healing. We can contend

that given improper combination of circumstances things go from bad to worse. Grief becomes deeper, the ravages of sickness advance, the discords between peoples of the earth grow in tension with the cessation of war and the futile struggles for peace. But need this be? Most of us operate outside the plane of incurables. Or finding ourselves with a lasting sorrow, a permanent handicap, an irreconcilable disagreement with other nations we learn to live within our limitations. Time and a well-chosen course dull the pain which at first seemed unendurable and heal the wound which we thought would always yawn.

Time opens vistas of possible achievement. It is a great boon to optimism. Looking forward we see the hope of accomplishments beyond the mundane events of today. There is always the hope for tomorrow, and not an ill-founded one. Look back at the strong lives that weathered the stresses of depression and war. Look back at the growth of ideals and customs not current decades ago. By wanting progress and choosing to do the things which will bring it, we shall be able in time to overcome prejudice, greed, fear, hate, distrust.

For teachers this challenge of the future was never greater than it is now. Our only enemy is ignorance. The only sound basis for peace which all the world craves is in the minds of men. There is the temptation to become embroiled in the clutter of little disturbing things that prevent us from engaging in major crusades for saving the world. If one lacks the power to reflect on the significance of the little things that teachers do, his life looks futile indeed. Pity such a one. For in the larger sense the minutiae of the

work with growing minds and bodies hold great hope for the future.

In face of the importance of schools and teaching in this troubled world, it is too bad to hear on all sides that teachers feel they haven't time to teach. When time runs low, it is just good sense to weigh values and choose to do the most important things. Sometimes the very pressures we deplore force us to our best achievement. Put on our metal we are obliged to excel, to shun the trivial, to avoid waste of time in mental confusions about being pushed.

It's Smart To Have Time

The clock and the calendar are inventions to aid in orderly living. When they were invented they introduced an element of strain into life. The telephone, the doorbell, the mail, the time schedule, et al., have increased the strain as civilization has become more complex. But each of us has a lifetime to work in. Let's be honest about the use of it.

We have our limitations. We can't do everything. But we can find time to do the things we ourselves choose to do. We can thread our way through the trivia of everyday interruptions and still have time to reflect on their importance to the total drama of life. We can mature and grow through the experiences offered by time and help children to do so. By so doing we can find the healing balm of time and the courage that comes from the vistas of future achievements.

We can avoid making time the scapegoat of our shortcomings. Real prestige and satisfaction of an individual or a profession do not come from being harassed, overworked or "put upon." It's smart to have time to do what we think is important to us.

Saving Time to Teach

— Through Planned Learning Experiences

Considerations basic to saving time for teaching are discussed by Ruth Strickland, associate professor of education, Indiana University. She emphasizes the importance of knowing children, of building readiness for learning, of enriching curriculum, and of doing long term planning.

TIME, TO CHILDREN, EXISTS FOR DOING things. They are aware of time and concerned about it only when it is too brief to round out an interest, too empty of challenge or too filled with experiences they do not enjoy or in which they see no significance. Often the little incidental things are fully as valuable to them as the larger, adult-planned experiences. Children learn about life through the experience of living. That experience is made up of the everyday things that must be done plus all the myriads of challenging opportunities and extras that are not a part of necessity.

Teaching and learning are most fruitful when they proceed in a leisurely manner in an atmosphere of composure, confidence, and high interest. Such learning conditions are dependent upon careful weighing of values.

The teacher is the maker of the child's curriculum regardless of requirement. There is general agreement at the present time with regard to the basic needs of children for security, affection, happiness, and an opportunity to grow and learn. There is some agreement as to types of experience children need at different stages in their development but there is less agreement as to details of curriculum content. The important learning experiences can

often be attained as well with one type of content as with another.

Children need time and opportunity to share, plan, organize, and evaluate. They need time to follow through their plans. They need opportunity to solve real problems, to develop interests, to become acquainted with the tools of learning and to develop skill in using them. There should be time to talk, listen, and think; time to follow directions and time to be creative; time for social interaction and time for individual experience. The quality and kind of planning which a teacher does as she provides learning experiences for her group determine in large measure the quality of growth which will result.

Starting With the Children

Schools exist because children need them so it is logical to start with the children in planning learning experiences. Well trained teachers know the general developmental needs of the children they teach but the specific needs of each child call for constant study. Knowing each child intimately enables the teacher to use children's needs as her guides in planning learning experiences rather than to use textbooks, courses of study, or ready-made units of work, and avoids the danger of overemphasis upon transitory interests. It enables her to provide the challenge

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and stimulation which each child needs. It helps to avoid trying to do the impossible with children who are immature and unready with the consequent frustration for all concerned. It also makes possible individual guidance of behavior which is constructive and preventive so that there is growth in self direction and self discipline.

Children do not need to be taught all of the time. They need leisure to work through each new experience, to absorb and assimilate it, and to fit it into the growing pattern of their thinking and living. Teaching and learning are not simultaneous. Perhaps teaching is only the "push off," the initial motivation. The child goes on from there.

Working together as a family saves teacher time and adds values for children. In every group there are the more gifted children, the slower learners, and those with special handicaps and special abilities. Judicious use of children as teachers, leaders, and helpers gives bright children opportunity to learn that with ability goes responsibility. It enables less capable children to learn that their abilities and services are recognized and appreciated and helps them to grow in power and self respect. Children of all ages develop a deep sense of social responsibility through intimate, cooperative group living which is of inestimable value to them and to society.

Doing Things With Children

To do things *with* children instead of *for* children saves time and waste motion because what is done tends to be very close to their real needs and concerns. Helping children plan what they are going to do and how they are going to do it provides learning experiences which can be had in no other way.

Learning to plan and organize are developmental tasks similar to the tasks of learning to walk and to talk. They are tasks which the child must achieve for himself through his own experience; no amount of planning by others can achieve these learnings for him.

This does not mean that there must be cooperative group planning of everything that is done. Once planned, some things fall into the routine of habit which simplifies living and clears the way for important experiences which require effort and thought. Routine is neither bad nor good except as it aids or hinders growth.

Evaluating with children is another time-saver which increases teaching effectiveness. Children enjoy stopping now and then to ask, "Where are we now? How much have we accomplished of what we planned to do? Are we satisfied with what we have done or is there more that we should do?" Group evaluation develops critical thinking and ability to reason objectively as well as ability to see one's own part in a social whole. The essential attitudes of consideration and fair dealing and the skills needed in weighing values and considering evidence come easily with concrete experience but require years of effort to attain if confined to bookish, academic experience.

Individual evaluation is equally important. Reading a child's story, report or composition with him makes corrections far more meaningful than when they are handed back to him in cold red marks after he has lost interest in his product. Evaluating practice material or even workbooks, if one must use them, with the children at the end of the work period helps to make corrections and guidance important to the

child so that he will remember them. Most important of all, it saves the teacher's after-school preparation time for planning, gathering of materials, and recording of individual child study findings which make good teaching possible.

Evaluating group behavior and setting group standards with children makes them responsible for law enforcement and provides the weight of group approval or group censure where encouragement and guidance are needed. Children learn to govern themselves and to be responsible only as they are given opportunity to do so.

Reading and studying with children is an economical use of time as compared with the older method of assigning lessons for children to study and then hearing recitations. Reading with children affords opportunity to diagnose problems and modify techniques for guidance to fit each child's individual needs. Meeting individual reading needs is not so much a problem of time as it is of clear thinking. It takes very little additional time when children appeal for help to utilize a visual approach with one child, an auditory approach with another, and an associational or meaning emphasis with a third. Remedial work with some children when mass teaching fails is costly in every sense. Prevention of difficulty through constant watchfulness, diagnosis, and adjustment takes far less time.

Studying with children brings to light inadequacies in background and inaccuracy and vagueness of concepts. It helps children in finding their way through to clear understanding. Watts, in his recent book on children's language development, has called atten-

tion to his conviction that where textbooks abound "ignorance finds it easiest to disguise herself."¹ Great waste of time and effort occurs in textbook learning in many schools which could be avoided by working through basic material with children.

Readiness and Learning

Learning experiences are most effective when the learner is thoroughly ready for them. He must have sufficient knowledge, interest, and skill to lay hold of the experience and make it his own. Tremendous human waste occurs when children are put through course of study or teacher-initiated requirements for which they are not prepared, waste which includes mental and emotional maladjustment so devastating to some children that they never recover from it and their usefulness is impaired as long as they live. Building readiness for learning takes time but it takes less time than to undo the harm which results from an endeavor to force learning where readiness is lacking.

A few examples may help to clarify the problem. Many first grade teachers have become thoroughly convinced that slow beginnings in reading based upon a carefully built background of readiness bring dividends in skill, interest, and rate of progress later on. But others cling to traditional procedures which are of lasting detriment to their children. Readiness for reading is not confined to first grade. Children of any grade need to build the vocabulary of meanings and experience which will make the material of the page come to life, if they are to read and react to it. Children of middle grades become real readers only when reading means

¹ Watts, A. F. *The Language and Mental Development of Children*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1947.

enough to them that they seek it of their own volition because they enjoy it.

Readiness for new experiences in arithmetic, for social experience, for understanding of other cultures and other people are only a few of the many forms of readiness essential to children in the elementary school. Building readiness requires time, thoughtfulness in studying individual needs, sympathetic concern for individual problems, and an immense amount of resourcefulness in finding ways to provide the necessary firsthand and vicarious experiences. Sometimes what is needed is patience in waiting until the requisite maturity has been achieved and resourcefulness in providing in the meantime the fundamental basic experiences which ultimately bring readiness.

Building readiness needs to be thought of as an integral part of the teaching job, not just preparatory to it. No aspect of teaching requires greater skill or is more important. Putting this emphasis into its proper place in the total teaching responsibility results in a revision of values which greatly relaxes teaching tensions.

Problems of Content

The problem of content in the lower grades is that there be enough of it for normal growth. Since the material of reading for primary grade children deals almost entirely with known words and experiences they need suitable social studies and science content. Such content will develop new vocabulary, interests, and understanding of the world of people and things so that they can use it as background for later reading. Interest in content sharpens interest and initiative in developing skills. It serves a dual purpose from the beginning and can be utilized to provide

practice in skill development at many points.

Content for older children needs to be associated in some way with their interests and concerns. This is possible if teachers will start each new area of study with the children themselves and the present-day implications of the area. There are vital current problems and inter-relationships which can be used as the springboard for any required study. Again it is true that if children can help with the selection and planning of interests the values are multiplied. Even the most rigid requirement can be clothed with life and interest through planned experiences.

It is usually true that firsthand experiences bring knowledge, insight, and understanding more quickly than remote, vicarious experiences. Where firsthand experiences are lacking, audio-visual materials and wide reading in books other than textbooks clarify impressions and stimulate thinking.

The more remote an interest is from the children's experience the greater the need for time for talking so that material can take on meaning. Children cannot think what they do not know and cannot express. Talking and thinking are very closely related during the elementary school years. This is another reason for studying with children and helping them to work through the reading of required basic material. With this as background they can go on to other non-textbook material and handle it more independently. To start a study of an area with stories and current material which make it appear real is a more logical approach than the highly compressed textbook content so often required.

Long term planning in content areas as well as in others gives children and

teacher more to work with and more purposefulness in approaching work. Formal courses of study, textbook assignments, and readymade units of work do little to stimulate the planning, organizing, and evaluating which children need in quantity as they grow and mature.

Breaking down subject compartmentalization in the social studies results in saving time and increases learning since the history, geography, government, social, and economic life of people are all very closely interwoven. It saves time in the development of skills as well because they are practiced in situations of real use and need. Since skills do not exist in and for themselves, practice can be gained through the use of any content.

Time to Develop Skills

In some schools skill development occupies far more than its rightful share of time and the results are nearly always disappointing. A number of research studies utilizing large numbers of children has shown conclusively that schools which give more time to other experiences develop skills fully as well as the schools which spend most time in the skill-drill type of procedure. Skills are not ends in themselves but means to ends and are learned most economically in situations of real use. The task of developing skills cannot be split into segments apportioned to grade levels, and used as hurdles for promotion if we are genuinely interested in acquiring usable skills. Rates of growth in developing skills vary widely. A child who is slow in developing speech may speak as well and as much as children who started earlier. Children who take more time to develop academic skills may achieve as much as more rapid learners, provided we do not undermine their

confidence as learners and their natural zest for learning through forcing them.

Initiative Versus Obedience

Permitting children a wholesome measure of freedom to choose their work and to carry it through on their own initiative is an important time-saver. A vast amount of teacher time is spent each school year in planning and making so-called "seatwork" to keep children quiet and busy while the teacher works with another group. The time spent in preparation of the work material often far exceeds the time it takes the children to do the work. It is of doubtful value on all counts and actually may be harmful. Anything that bores children destroys interest in learning and results in unfavorable work habits. Yet a large proportion of workbook and teacher-made seatwork offers children little but boredom.

Children need to learn to obey where obedience is reasonable and to follow directions. They also need to learn to think for themselves and to develop their own judgment and initiative. To do the latter takes a great deal more learning and experience. A program of learning experiences heavily weighted with assignments and requirements is one-sided in its values and therefore harmful. Children could profitably spend half or more of their independent time in work of their own choosing. The teacher time saved could be spent in providing materials for the individualized teaching which many children need. Choice for children does not mean unguided experience, waste of time or license. It means that children have opportunity to do their own thinking, to act on thinking, then to evaluate their own achievement.

Long Term Planning

Long term planning of the basic experiences which children need for general development and detailed study, and planning of the possible experiences which can be utilized in developing knowledge and skills give the teacher a framework within which to carry on each day's work. As one lays out a long term plan for children's development it becomes obvious that there is no one way of arriving at essential goals. If the teacher has thought through many possible learning experiences for children—probably far more than she will actually use in teaching—she is prepared to watch for leads in the children's conversation and interests and to utilize these as starting points or means of furthering her plans. Using motivations which already exist saves time and effort in making things move because it utilizes driving force present in the children. Essential experiences can be fitted into the program of work whenever they are suitable and useful.

A chart setting up the overall picture of the possibilities in the year's work and a diary which records briefly what goes on day by day give the teacher a sense of direction and progress. Planning that is done solely through the piecemeal laying out of separate small requirements for each day makes the program appear oppressively crowded. It gives the teacher a sense of futility because the little pressures are so numerous and each in itself so lacking in significance. The significance of teaching lies in what is happening to children rather than in pages covered and words learned.

The third type of record which is

essential to good planning is a simple scheme of recording the growth, needs, and progress of each child. A loose-leaf notebook with an index tab for each child, a card file or any form easiest for the teacher can be used. Here she accumulates the brief notes on significant observations of child behavior and an equally brief record of the special materials and adaptations she is providing for each child. These records form the basis for discussions with parents and any required reports for the school files.

Experience and Growth

Everything that happens to children at school is a part of their learning experience. Helping with classroom chores, getting out materials, cleaning up and putting away materials, discussing behavior problems, planning details of organization—all the little preliminaries and follow-up activities of classroom living can be fully as important in learning values as the periods spent in book work and the development of academic tool skills. Handling lunch and bank money, paper drives, Junior Red Cross, invitations to participate in the activities of other classrooms and all the hundred and one other extras constitute part of the learning experience. Children enjoy them and take them in their stride without being disturbed by them.

Seeing the job of teaching as carrying through clearly defined activities and the covering and mastering of specific amounts of material makes time to teach a very serious problem. To think of teaching as developing children and to consider subject matter and teaching techniques as means to that end release tensions and make teaching a satisfying experience.

Times That Try Teachers' Souls

"If I only had time to teach" is a frequently expressed regret of many teachers. To find out how teachers feel about encroachments upon their time with the children we invited nineteen teachers in sixteen states to answer the following questions:

What are some of the things that interrupt your school day activities and take your time from the children?

Do the things that cut down on your teaching time serve only to interrupt, annoy and disturb? Or, do some of these interruptions make a better contribution to the children than would the things you had planned with and for them?

What are you doing to stop these interruptions, to change inflexible time schedules, to handle the many demands made upon you and the children? Or, if you are unable to do anything, what in your opinion could be done?

The teachers' replies form the symposium that follows.

This Is My Day

A BEAUTIFUL MORNING! POETS THROUGH all times have sung its praises. But the fascination of morning as sung by poets, "dew pearled" though it may be, cannot compare with this morning as I walk into my schoolroom and see the shining scrubbed freshness of six-year-olds. The children gather close about me. We begin our plans for our day.

Four walls should not confine us on such a day as this, so we start for a walk. But no! A whining screech and the public address system rasps out in a spine-shaking blast, "Teachers, how many bottles of milk are needed in your rooms today? Please send in this information at once."

We check the number and decide to leave it as we go out for our walk. Perish the thought! Before we are well out of our seats a boy comes in with the movie tickets.

"Children, please take your seats. Get out your movie money and form a line so that I can check it and then we can be on our way."

We check our tickets, place them in my desk, and this time we actually get out of the room.

Our morning is going fast. We stop by the cafeteria to deposit the milk slip and go on our way. There is an apathetic limpness to our interest now; a lagging of spirits here and there. We try to buoy them up with the artificiality of speech. Bright sun! Blue sky! A startling flash of color from a winging bird! And then, as we near our building again, a lovely rainbow where the water is spraying the grass.

Our enthusiasm returns a hundred-fold. We crowd for places, not too politely, I'm afraid. Each personal find of color is shouted gleefully for all to hear. Finally we tear ourselves away and into the room we go again.

We cannot wait to write up the stories of the wonderful things we saw: the "scrumptious" rainbows to be splashed across the easels; a recording of all that we've seen; songs to be sung—so many ideas tumbling headlong over each other. We try to chart our course so that nothing will be forgotten when suddenly a voice, "Oh, Miss Jones, I hate to interrupt but you do have such clever ideas! I know you won't mind giving me just a moment."

I look desperately at the little faces, some already congealed in polite masques, others casting furtive glances about the room to other interests. "Children," I call, "will you please take paper from the drawer and make a picture of the thing you liked most on our walk?"

I pull my thoughts back to the mother's P.T.A. project. I try to outline a seemingly simple idea but it takes more detailed explanation than I had counted on. Finally the idea is made clear but she must take more of our time for well-meant, effusive thanks.

In place of a minute, an hour has passed. The picture begun so auspiciously has long since palled. A "tug-of-war" for ownership of a disputed pencil has drawn a clamorous, congested group. I try politely to evict the P.T.A. worker. She is on her way at last but the clamor is now a full-fledged uproar. I wade in with more valor than wisdom and finally a truce is made. The little people find their seats. No longer do I see that secret inner glow of the early morning but the whole gauntlet of human emotion por-

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trayed in harassed, belligerent, perplexed or sullen faces that would even daunt Wordsworth's idea of immortality.

I glance at the clock. It is time for lunch! I must somehow create an element of happiness before food can be taken.

Even lunch is not immune to interruptions! A mother brings in Johnnie's sweater because the weather is growing much colder. We have "tiptoe recess" and go back to the room.

I start to read the story of *Noah and the Ark* with records and pictures. I just get Noah's family introduced when the public address blares forth, "All children please come to the auditorium for practice on the Christmas program and songs."

We start for the auditorium. A mother rushes up breathlessly. I stop the line. "Oh, Miss Jones, I forgot to give Johnny his movie money." I try to accept it graciously.

The practice over, we go back to our rooms. Again I take up the cudgels. We try to get back to Noah, to God's promises, and the rainbow. Another voice at the door. "Please, may I take Mary now? I have a dental appointment and barely time to make it." I excuse Mary and open the book. Again the public address system breaks in with the day's announcements. They go on interminably. Drooping, dejected, and squirming, the little group is now a sorry spectacle. My frayed nerves will not permit much tolerance for their justifiable restlessness.

The public address desists. I look at the clock. It is the hour of dismissal. Our beautiful day! Our lovely plans! Where are they?

I pass out the movie tickets and manage somehow to get the children deposited at the movie. I go back to my room, clear away the day's disorders, and close my doors.

And So To Bed

Utterly exhausted with the day's frustrations, I get into my car and battle the city traffic until I reach my door and a tub of soothing warm water, ever a panacea for frenzied nerves. At length I find myself between the cool, clean sheets of my bed, murmuring, "Dear Father, Forgive us our trespasses . . . Deliver us from evil . . ." I sink into oblivion and then, the telephone ringing, ringing, ringing! I reach it at long last. "Hello! Hello!"

"I'm sorry; wrong number."

This is my day!—By VERA SCRUGGS
KNIGHT, Miami, Florida.

It's the Stopping and the Starting Again

THERE WAS A LONG FREIGHT TRAIN AND I KNEW the bus would be late," wailed Mary Lou, almost in tears when she discovered that her group had started reading in the long-awaited new books.

"And we slowed down to wait for a herd of cows, too," added Johnny as he handed his lunch money and bus permit card to Miss Taylor.

"Can you change lunch periods with the fifth grade today? They are going to see the exhibit at the community house and would like to eat at the first lunch period," hastily queried the principal from the door.

"Johnny's lunch money to go to the clerk. Wonder why that fifth grade teacher didn't do her planning and asking yesterday? I'll never get any interest in this reading lesson started again," muttered Miss Taylor as she turned to face a group of second graders who had wiggled and lost all contact with the day's plans.

"May I make an announcement about the junior class candidate for carnival queen?" The earnest campaign manager had ignored the sign on the classroom door: "Testing—Do Not Disturb." He had been excused from study hall for thirty minutes and wanted every pupil from grades one to twelve to know that the junior class had a queen who should be elected.

"Come back later," said Mrs. Brown and inwardly rejoiced that the test in progress was not one of those which had been given by the supervisor the day before. "Later" meant about fifteen seconds, she decided, as the junior classman opened the door again to call out hastily, "The principal said to tell you that the bookmobile would be here this afternoon. He forgot to tell the teachers yesterday."

Miss Brent glanced through the open door as the uniformed man passed and wondered what a city fireman was doing in the little rural school. A minute later the wild peal of the fire gong sounded. Every teacher in the building felt as did Miss Brent that this time the fire must be a reality.

When the children were safely outside and the fire marshalls had closed all doors, the fireman walked up to Miss Brent and asked, "Where is Mrs. Johnson?"

"She has been promoted to Barker School and I am principal of Gordon this year," answered Miss Brent.

"Say, I'm sorry I had a fire drill without warning you but I've always come out here to check your fire drills during Fire Prevention Week and I just supposed Mrs. Johnson was still here."

"Fine fire drill, Miss Brent." The county superintendent evidently had driven up in time for the action. "Well, let's get them back inside as quickly as they came out. I've brought the new Junior Red Cross representative out to discuss some plans with your teachers before time to begin the annual membership drive."

The five other teachers and Miss Brent exchanged fleeting glances of despair. Where would they find time for their carefully planned assembly program for Fire Prevention Week? Why did interruptions always seem to come at the wrong time?

Interruptions which take time from the planned activities of the teacher's day may be divided into three groups: those which are unexpected and unavoidable; those which result from poor planning within the school; and those which come from agencies, groups or individuals outside the school who need the support of pupils and teachers in their promotional activities.

Miss Taylor's interrupted second grade reading lesson is an example of both the first and second types. Even in the worst of bad weather late buses, balky furnaces or other inconveniences are generally infrequent. When they do occur, they must be met with the extra patience all teachers need for such emergencies.

The interruptions which come from poor planning or no planning by administrators and other teachers are the ones which are most irritating but should be the easiest of all to eliminate. Few schools tolerate any interruptions during class periods—no phone calls for teachers, no parents calling for pupils except in real emergencies.

Principals and teachers planning together can use the activities which will be a part of the year's work in a balanced program of organization: time and place for announcements, for regular visits such as those of the bookmobile, for assemblies, for club meetings. All the activities which make up such a program should be consistently scheduled and that schedule respected and followed. Then, interruptions of the classroom schedule will cease to be irritations and can be made part of the daily plan.

One second grade in a school where such planning is done kept a daily diary. It recorded visits from the supervisor and county librarian, recounted the enjoyment of assemblies and other programs, anticipated the pleasure of filling a gift box for the Junior Red Cross, and through the whole year realized what sharing in so many activities meant in widening the horizons of their own wonderful world of school life.

To some teachers the many campaigns and drives which clamor for attention and assistance from the schools seem like exploitation of good nature and cooperation. One rural school system took inventory of the membership drives, the seal sales, and gift campaigns in which the teachers and pupils participated. It found that there were nine during the school year, all of which involved giving or soliciting money. No wonder that some patrons had begun to look with distrust on mimeographed announcements,

waving from the hands of homeward-bound pupils. Yet every cause was worthy, and sharing with others is one of the virtues we want children to develop.

Decisions concerning participating in such campaigns should be made jointly by pupils, parents, teachers, and administrators. Then the "drive" will go forward with the impetus of honest conviction in its worthiness and not because it is pushed by orders from above that our quota is so much and we must meet it by such a time.

Some of the times which try the souls of teachers can never be entirely eliminated, but planning and patience will help. There may be fewer teachers to gasp at the end of a trying day, "I don't mind the work. It's the stopping and starting again that wears me out."—By RUTH GUTHRIE, *Little Rock, Arkansas.*

It's the Expanding Services of the School

Go slowly, go slowly, O Time, have mercy on me
Let me get everything done before it is three!

Let no interruption mar this peaceful day.
Let me follow my schedule, just once, I do pray.

Let no one come knocking at my classroom door,
Give me a day with my children, I beg and implore.

Go slowly, go slowly, O Time, have mercy on me,
Let me get everything done before it is three!

MILK MONEY! DIXIE CUP MONEY! LUNCH money! Junior Red Cross money! War memorial money! Did anyone find this? Did anyone lose that? When will it end? If only I had time to teach!

Who has not said these words over and over again? And with some justification, too. All of these things take time—that elusive something of which we do not have enough. But, "you can't see the sun when you're crying"—so instead of the blues maybe we can make a brighter picture by looking for the sun.

Are we blinding ourselves to the vast storage of possibilities which these interruptions present? Do we see these "time-takers" as obstacles to our plans rather than as challenges to our ingenuity? Can we make these interruptions contribute something to the child's living in school? Can we make our plans flexible so that these "necessary evils" are included in a meaningful way?

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I believe that many of them can be made an integral part of our planning, and that many exciting and dynamic experiences will evolve. The "evils" can be turned into "blessings."

All first grade teachers know the trying times of the first few weeks of school. We must learn about the children: their names, their likes and dislikes, their interests, and their abilities. At the same time we must collect money for milk and dixie cups (we have no lunch program). While we do these things the children get in a m and twist.

We might have gone on and on in this way but after taking the children to see the milkman deliver milk to the school, interest was aroused and we were launched on a delightful activity of "playing milkman." A milkman and a helper were chosen by the group. They chose one who could count and one who was learning to count. The others became "customers." The milkman, his helper, and the customers had definite responsibilities decided by the group. These were printed on charts and "read" many times.

Stories and poems were written and recorded on charts; pictures were painted; games were played; and many other interesting experiences took form. Aside from the factual knowledge gained, the children were living together; planning, sharing, taking turns; developing a sense of belonging; assuming responsibilities, and in general growing into socialized human beings.

A trip to the farm followed, in time, by a visit to the dairy added further stimulating experiences. The language, reading, art, and arithmetical possibilities evolving from these "interruptions" were manifold.

The sale of dixie cups was handled in much the same way with an ice cream man and a helper. Since dixie cups cost five cents, different arithmetical situations arose—counting by 5's, and making change from a dime and a quarter.

Collecting money for the Red Cross and packing boxes for children in other countries was another interruption. But the time was ripe for a little international understanding, even by six-year-olds. Stories, pictures, and articles made their contributions to the children's understanding and their desire to help. Let's send something 'cause they don't have nothin'."

What to send? "Something to play with, something to work with, something to clean up with" and maybe "something to make them look nice." All sorts of ideas were forthcoming

but on seeing the boxes the children concluded, "Just little things will go in those."

Finally, the purchasing done by the children, the boxes were packaged, one for a boy and one for a girl. Such fitting and placing and repacking so that everything would fit just so! "It looks like Santa's pack," said one little girl. "I guess we're like Santa Claus." Another said, "I wonder where it will go. I know some one will feel good." So another "time-taker" made a definite contribution to the children.

It seems that most of our interruptions are caused by collecting money for this or for that. But we were annoyed, really annoyed, by children who had lost something—from sweaters and jackets to teeth being saved to put under the pillow at night. After the fourth interruption in one day Bobby who was "receptionist" said in exasperation, "You people ought to tie your things on you. Come back after school. You're 'sturbin' our work."

Of course he was rude, but out of his rudeness was born the lost and found department which operates under the direction of the upper grade pupils. Illustrated charts listing lost and found articles were displayed on a bulletin board where all could see. The child who found something and the child who lost something posted the articles. First graders drew pictures until they learned to write. All children cooperated in solving this problem, and as a result better understood themselves and their relationship to others. Another interruption developed into a functional activity in which the whole school participates.

The foregoing interruptions are those which have been made a part of the child's living in school and have given him an insight into human relationships, and some understanding of social behavior. The following one we are still dreaming about and trying to solve.

We all realize and appreciate the great importance of parent-teacher conferences. If these interviews merit the importance which we bestow upon them let us have time *devoted* to them—not after school with Johnny tugging on mother's skirts, not during schooltime while forty Jacks and Jeans wiggle and wonder, not at P.T.A. meetings while a dozen mothers wait but at some specific time set aside solely for interviewing. Perhaps a half-day a month while the children are with a special teacher or dismissed for the afternoon. Let us have appointments (other professional groups do) so that we see the parents that we really

need to see. Can this, too, be made part of our school planning?

All interruptions did not just pop up in one day and they will not all disappear in one day. They are the outcome of expanding the services of the school. Many of them can be drawn into our plans if we will forget the mad race against time and make time work for us. Let us take our time!—By JOSEPHINE C. YARNALL, Cumberland, Maryland.

It's the Ringing of the Bells

DEAR BETTY: HERE WE ARE ALL READY FOR a new year and there are many things that aggravate and try a teacher's patience to the nth degree. At the end of this first day of school there comes to mind changes that might be made to meet the needs of the child.

I have thirty-five children in my room. Some of course are not ready to do second grade work and extra time will have to be given to the slow pupils. If we could have a high first grade or, better still, an "opportunity room" it would mean much to everyone concerned. The slow child could be given much individual attention and the strength and energy of the teacher could be saved for all the children in the room.

There is a lot of time wasted. I suppose in a building where there are over four hundred children there have to be "bells." The children have to wait for a bell to ring to get ready for play, then wait five more minutes for another bell before they can go out on the playground.

After play period there is another bell—the "line bell"—then three more minutes before the children can go to their rooms.

Everything and everyone is scheduled by "bells." If we get through with reading five minutes early, why waste that five minutes waiting? The children could go out to play as a special privilege for good work. If we have to rush through to be ready when the bell rings, why not spend the necessary time required to finish the job well, then go out to play even though we stay a few minutes after the other children come in?

Another great waste of time is when the children get water. We certainly need more fountains.

Then, too, there are the times when older brothers and sisters come to see about the younger children. We do try to have them speak quietly to the children, but they do forget. How much better to let little brother or

little sister grow up without the constant supervision of big brothers and sisters.

Again, there is a fifteen minutes waste of time just before noon. All the children in the first and second grades who eat in the cafeteria go at eleven forty-five each day. The children who go home for lunch must wait in the room until twelve o'clock, rush home, "gobble" their food, and get back for the twelve forty-eight "line bell."

There is some flexibility in our schedule as long as we can get through in time for the "play bell" and ready for the cafeteria. We are given the privilege of arranging our schedules to suit our convenience.

I wonder why it wouldn't be possible to have the children go out to play when the teacher felt that they were tired and needed a play period, even though the "recess bell" had not rung. Children not playing would go on with their work knowing that their play period would come later. This, too, would give all children an opportunity to use the playground equipment which is not sufficient for the whole school to use at once.

It seems that less time could be spent in "getting ready" to do things if the children went out to play at different times. There would not be such congestion at the drinking fountains. When children have an hour for lunch, some time can be found for attention to manners. No child who has to rush with his food can digest his food as he should. It would be grand if all the children could eat at school or if those who go home could have an hour for lunch. After all, the health of the child should come before many less essential things.

I hope that you will have a happy year's work. I really trust that some improvements can be made in all school schedules and that we soon realize we are educating children and not just living by bells. As ever, Ruth.—By RUTH MCPHERSON DOTY, *Tupelo, Mississippi.*

It's Those Within the Building

WHAT A GRAND TIME WE WERE HAVING traveling across the country when a voice boomed into my ear, "Visual aids is on the line. Where is the land transportation film? The film on ocean liners was held over by another school. It will be sent as soon as possible."

Now we must travel at a slower rate. We dare not reach the Atlantic Coast ahead of our ocean liner. Will we be dropped into Switzer-

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land by the visual aids department before we can cross the Atlantic Ocean? If we only had a good world map we could plan our itinerary, compare climatic conditions, decide what type of clothing we might need. There is but one world map in the building. Should I send a child to borrow it and interrupt another group?

At this point the primary recess bell rings and the little ones descend to the tiny playground. Their joyous shouts fill the air and make it impossible to proceed with conversation in the classroom. I allow my mind to conjure upon the happenings of the day:

What did that announcement say?

Did the little boy with the lost coat find its owner?

Did the little girl find her library books?

Why did Miss Cox send for George?

Why didn't Mary return her dental slip?

Did that group of visitors see anything worth-while?

Will the paper sale be worth the effort and time we are putting into it?

Why is James taking so long to deliver those Victory Stamp envelopes to each room?

What happened to the lunch-check money?

Did Bill lose it on the way to buy the checks or did they give him the wrong change?

What am I going to do about the two lunch checks which disappeared yesterday?

Can I get those three undernourished children on the feeding list?

What can I do to get John to school on time and when will I have time to make out all those attendance records, reports, and referrals?

If I had that good set of travel readers in my room I could use them right now. Whoever is using them forgot to fill out the card or they have been returned to the wrong shelf. I have already spent two mornings looking for them.

Why doesn't that recess bell ring? It's past time for it.

Will I have to wait several minutes to get my boys into the gymnasium? If so, is it because my watch is fast or is she holding the other class overtime? What will my girls be doing while I am waiting in the hall with my boys? Should I go after my boys a few minutes later or take the chance of their being dismissed before I get there?

Should I take all the children to the lavatory after their gymnasium period or permit them to go one by one? If I take them, should I stay with the boys or the girls?

The primary children have returned to their rooms. Just as we are ready to start again on our journey a very small child enters the room. As she begins to speak a street car rattles by, accompanied by the whistle of two trains. She repeats her sad story. The two play leaders from my room took her rope and played with it all recess.

As she is leaving the room the janitor enters carrying two buckets of coke which he dumps in the coke box. His helper appears with a large

platform. At last we are going to have clean windows.

In the preceding imaginary school day I have endeavored to point out some of the interruptions teachers must meet. There are others such as rehearsals, selling of seeds and photos, outside entertainers, dismissal for church schools, and visiting by high school pupils.

There are far too many interruptions and much can and has been done about them. Teachers can be more careful about returning visual aid materials on time, more and better teaching materials can be supplied to each room, new school buildings can be erected where there is plenty of space for children to play and away from train and streetcar noises. The older buildings should be renovated and enough janitorial staff provided to keep them clean. Electric bells should be installed in every building so that classes can move on schedule and teachers not have to become clock watchers.

The superintendent's advisory council has been studying the problem of interruptions in class activities. A questionnaire revealed that there was no general consensus as to specific interruptions to be eliminated but that those most annoying were initiated within the building. Most of the interruptions evaluated as of little or no educational value were those permissive in nature rather than obligatory. It was recommended by the advisory council that a survey on interruptions be made within each school and policies be set up for their control.
—By OPAL McWHORTER, Cincinnati, Ohio.

It's Knowing What To Put First

"IF I ONLY HAD TIME TO TEACH! This morning I collected money for hot lunches, penny milk, savings stamps, and the Red Cross. To keep that money straight is no small task! Then this was my day in the lunch room and that always wears me out. There seemed to be no end to interruptions for notices and announcements that had to be given immediate attention. Now when four o'clock has come and I need so badly to prepare my work I must dash off to a curriculum meeting!"

How many times have you expressed these thoughts or similar ones and heard countless other teachers express them in one way or another? Sometimes one wonders if our schools are taking the responsibility for so much that the time, energy, and ability of the teacher are

stretched to the breaking point. She is exhausted before getting down to what is generally considered teaching.

There is a real question as to how far it is advisable or even right for our schools to attempt to take on responsibilities which rightfully belong in the home. Without doubt our schools need to work with the home in everything pertaining to the development and welfare of each child. But the school can never replace the home and give the training and care which every child has a right to expect from his parents.

Certainly it should be expected that parents, except in some special cases of course, should feed and clothe their children, teach them to take responsibility and to finish a job, to have serious concern for their physical and spiritual needs, and to surround them with the love and security which are indispensable to them. Many a teacher's most trying experiences are the result of added responsibilities taken over by the school because of the inadequacy of the home. They are doubly trying because much of what is attempted is fruitless and hopeless.

On the other hand, possibly we as teachers need to stop and consider what real teaching is, when and how we are doing it, and what phases of our teaching make the greatest contribution in helping the child take his place in society.

Are we teaching only when conducting the formal classes—writing, reading and arithmetic? Or are we doing a very significant type of teaching when the unexpected, trying situations interrupt our planned procedure and we must on the spur of the moment adjust to them and make the most of them?

It seems here as in most instances that *what* happens is not so important as what we *do* with what happens. Certainly in these uncertain times in which we live everyone needs to learn to meet the unexpected with calm poise and to give courteous, thoughtful attention to that which calls for attention at the moment. When a teacher has the ability to do this graciously and yet not lose hold on the regular routine of her room and the children in it, she is a good example of what democratic living demands.

If a teacher is wise enough to organize her room and to establish attitudes toward the unexpected, if the teacher and children are prepared and willing to work together in making the most of all situations, there is the very best kind of teaching, and learning is done by doing.

Children thrive on responsibility. If they

feel their cooperation is needed and appreciated, they will give it. They will go about their work quietly when the teacher must give her attention to someone or something aside from them. They will learn habits and attitudes which are much more important to them in life outside of school than the formal teaching the teacher would have been doing at that time.

To be the kind of teacher our times demand, one needs to be almost super-human mentally, physically, and spiritually. To keep a sane balance in the midst of the demands which crowd in upon us day after day does try the very souls of teachers. But let us put first things first. We can use even those situations of which we do not always wholeheartedly approve to help children learn to live cooperatively in a democratic world.—By RUTH J. MICHAELSON, Waterloo, Iowa.

It's Finding New Ways Of Working

MISS STEVENS, SIXTH GRADE TEACHER, GAZES ruefully at her calendar for the coming week. On it she notes: community chest drive; collect money for *My Weekly Reader*; sell tickets for P.T.A. pay affair; plan Junior Red Cross project; help with Boy Scout survey; curriculum meeting Thursday—dismiss thirty minutes early; instrumental class Wednesday morning—forty-five minutes for Bob, Clarence, Phyllis and Roger; office helpers each morning from 10:45-11:30. In small abbreviated words she has written: help Geo. with read.; prepare supp. work for Bob's group in arith.; help soc. studies committee assemble material for report; conference with Paul's mother.

With some misgiving Miss Stevens now turns to lesson planning for the week. As she proceeds she is continually reminded of interruptions that have frustrated her attempts to carry out activities of previous planning. Plans that were initiated through the needs and interests of the pupils were of necessity postponed or delayed in order to take care of other insistent demands on school time.

She is reminded, too, of the curriculum that is set up for her to follow and that there are standards of attainment to insure growth in learning. Her pupils are under her guidance and leadership for a specified amount of time in their school lives. If other agencies are allowed to impose too much upon this time, can pupils achieve their educational program?

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How can these demands be reconciled? Shall time and energy be utilized to carry out activities of community agencies at the expense of growth and development of young people? Do these activities provide educational opportunities for contributing to the development of skills, attitudes, and appreciations of socially competent individuals? Or are they just devices for an easy way to make contact with all the homes of the community? Shall school programs be made flexible enough to include the activities? This, of course, means subtracting from the curriculum.

Discussions with other teachers and with the principal in which concern over these problems has been voiced are now recalled by Miss Stevens. They felt that certain skills are learned best by pupils at certain periods in their lives. Maladjustment may come later from failing to keep up with contemporaries in academic work or keen disappointment may result from inability to apply tool subjects in work for which an individual has a special aptitude. Therefore, the value of those extra-curricular activities, which in themselves are educationally valuable, may be offset by the lack of mastery in basic skill subjects. They agreed that there must be some way in which the pupils' and the teachers' time can be freed from the accumulation of excessive outside demands.

A ray of hope enters Miss Stevens' mind as she recalls an incident related to her by another teacher. A principal and a P.T.A. group planned the ticket sale for a pay affair in such a way that all the detailed work of distribution, collection, and compilation of tickets and records was executed by a group of mothers. This co-operation in one type of out-of-school project can be effectively applied to other fields if we, as school people, will try to educate civic groups in the ways in which they can work through the schools without decreasing their efficiency.

—By CORRINE RIGG, *Decatur, Illinois.*

Opportunities for Learning

CAN INTERRUPTIONS BE OPPORTUNITIES FOR learning? To our door came these interruptions: Have you got change for a five dollar bill? Please read this notice right now. Can you give us a piece of green paper like this one? My teacher needs three red crayons.

If we as teachers were as thoughtful of our neighbors as we expect our children to be of one another, we would never have these kinds

of interruptions. They say opportunity knocks but once but sometimes it seems to knock itself out at our door.

However, a real opportunity came when a second grade teacher undertook the responsibility for distributing the audio-visual materials which come to our school each week from the division of audio-visual education. She needed free school time in order to have the help of older children. The first grade teachers took turns inviting her pupils to visit with their groups.

Somehow it almost always slipped my mind that it was our turn to provide for the second graders until they were at our door. We tried to make the things we did—stories, games, songs—meaningful but somehow they never seemed to satisfy both groups. It was fun being together but it was just marking time.

Then one of the first grade teachers conceived the idea of having the second graders help her 1-high group with arithmetic. The 1-high group evidenced very little interest in counting and number writing. A child for a teacher might help. This idea was the beginning of a fruitful use of what had previously been just a rather pleasant interruption.

The first time the plan was used a second grader was paired with a first grader. Each week they worked with one another, writing numbers and counting. The second graders who participated in the exchange the second time were those who had been the learners before. Thus their position was reversed and they now had the opportunity to be the teacher.

It was soon evident that we teachers had not done too good a job of selecting working partners. With the organization of the next group the partners were arranged by sociometric choice. Several opportunities were provided for the two groups to become acquainted with one another and then each child was asked to name children in the other group with whom he would like to work. They were paired according to their choices.

We feel that this interruption provides us with a real opportunity to share experiences and to give children a chance to experience both the teacher and learner role. In some instances the first graders were really the teachers. It gives the children a chance to feel that they have something to give, something that they can share with others. It has been a challenging activity to both teachers and children.—By LOUISE CARR, *St. Louis, Missouri.*

Valuable Tools for Teaching

INTERRUPTIONS!! YES, EVERY DAY AND MANY times a day, but we utilize these anticipated and unexpected interruptions as valuable teaching opportunities and as a part of the on-going experiences in the day's living. What richer resources of related and functional experiences could be found for the growth and development of the individual?

To be sure it takes time and patience to work and plan with children at their own natural speed in developing a need for and an acceptance of responsibility. But once accepted the children stay with a task until it is completed because they like to work and like to feel they are a vital part of the school.

The anticipated periods of the day—music, art, recreation, speech—are not interruptions but part of the day's program. The special teachers work and plan with the regular room teacher and the children.

Films to be seen, trips and excursions to be taken, convocations and book fairs to attend, specialists to listen to and question, visits to the reading room and the library, and buying trips are all planned by the teacher and children and cannot truly be called interruptions.

The daily checking with the nurse, the signing for milk and lunch—these become responsibilities of the first grade children early in the year. They take turns reporting the number to the office.

Last year the second and third grade children who had to stay for lunch ate in the first grade room. The first grade children made their room ready, arranged the tables and set places for twenty to thirty children. The committee in charge knew that twenty minutes to twelve was its time to begin work. One hot dish was prepared in the kitchen by a nutritionist and brought into the room to be served.

The unexpected interruptions—a child from another room wants to make an announcement. How important this is both for the child making the announcement and for the children to whom it is made! It takes a very few minutes to call the children together. What a fine opportunity for real discussion.

The things that are brought to school to share—pets, a dead bird, a stone, a snake, new shoes—anything, take time to have them shown and talked about. Let that reading lesson wait a minute. More real reading and language arts can come out of such experiences.

Unexpected visitors — parents, students, teachers—make your room conducive to welcoming, to questioning, and to participating.

Annual drives—paper collecting, C.A.R.E. packages, Junior Red Cross, beautification of the school grounds. Interruptions? Of course not! We want to be a part of these activities. They will take time but that's not the important consideration. What will they do to and for the children?

Frequently more growth and development take place where these so-called interruptions occur and are made a part of the teaching experience than when the teachers' planned program is in progress. When we guide children to accept room responsibilities, we are teaching. The children are learning the techniques of co-operation, the feeling of sharing; they are seeing the relatedness of everything they are working with—music, art, and the so-called skill subjects. Everything blends into a day's living, and it is in this blending that major opportunities for real teaching occur. "Interruptions," properly evaluated, may be considered as valuable tools for teaching.—By MABEL B. OLSON, *Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.*

Some Things Have Right of Way

MISS X SAT AT HER DESK AFTER SCHOOL thinking of her work for the day. The story she had so carefully prepared had been crowded out completely. Was it her fault or the fault of circumstances? Could the interruptions of the day be responsible for her failure to complete her program?

Miss X resolved to find out. She listed all that had happened and the time each consumed. In earlier days she might have considered health inspection and banking as interruptions but now that she realized their importance and value, they had an important place. Here is her list:

Read announcement of teacher's meeting—two minutes.
John's mother came to say that they were moving that morning and she wanted to turn in his books and get his supplies—ten minutes.

The office secretary brought in a new pupil—five minutes.

Miss Jones sent a boy in to ask the time—one minute.
Cared for George who had a nosebleed—six minutes.
Tom disturbed Mary's work while teacher cared for George. Problem settled—four minutes.

Answered telephone call from a mother reporting that a big boy has bothered her little boy on the way home for lunch—three minutes.

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Jane lost her quarter and was sure Walter had it. It was finally found in Jane's shoe—ten minutes.

Mrs. Brown, a working mother, came to find out why Johnny is failing in arithmetic—ten minutes.

An older child came by to collect for a sick teacher's gift—two minutes.

Miss X looked at her total time of interruptions—fifty-three minutes—and thought this must have been an unusual day. Then she remembered that yesterday the children had gone to rehearse for an auditorium program and that the day before they had seen a movie. She analyzed her list, decided which interruptions were unnecessary, and wrote her conclusions:

The announcement of the teacher's meeting was important but could have been posted on the bulletin board.

Parents should withdraw children after school on the day before moving, but in case of emergency the teacher must cooperate.

The teacher who needed to know the time should have made some provision for her own timekeeping.

Collections for gifts should be made when teaching would not be interrupted.

Parents should provide children with purse or pocket to take care of their money. If the possibility of theft arises, the matter should be handled at the time.

Miss X in looking over the other delays decided that each involved human relations:

For the new pupil, happy adjustment is of lasting consequence.

George's health is the important thing.

The old problem of bullying and tattling is involved in the telephone call.

The working mother deserves to have the advice and help of the teacher if the problem cannot be handled in a note.

As Miss X cleared her desk for the day, she decided that life was one interruption after another and that the most important thing must claim the right of way. Blessed is the teacher with the understanding heart.—By ESTHER HILL, Dallas, Texas.

The Good Teacher Knows Best

TEACHERS HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT THEY are the most important persons in the school system. Some leaders in education even maintain that the most valuable research in child development is done by the classroom teacher. This is heartening news and should offer a great challenge. However, as teachers grow in understanding their broader function they have a feeling of frustration. They cannot accomplish their goals without something they do not now have—time to teach. Here is an account of one day's interruptions:

A teacher and her children were busily planning their activities for the morning when the custodian came in to fill the inkwells. The teacher tried to keep the children interested in their plans but ink was spilled on several desks and had to be wiped up, several inkwells leaked and had to be noted for replacement, the custodian overlooked some inkwells and had to be called back to finish the job.

At ten o'clock, without any warning, two custodians appeared outside, closed all the windows, and began to wash them. It was difficult to carry on any work in the midst of the noise so the teacher took the children to the playground and let the custodians take over.

At ten-thirty the class returned to its classroom and began to work on the plans made earlier in the morning. At ten-forty the teacher suddenly remembered that all work must be put aside because the special teacher of creative dramatics was due. The special teacher had a difficult time getting the children to work out the next scene for their play. She complained because the children were restless and didn't have ideas.

Just as she was leaving the music supervisor arrived according to the schedule she followed every Monday morning. She attempted to have the children do some sight reading of a new song but they did not work very well. So she just let them sing. When she had stayed her twenty minutes she left.

The teacher glanced at the clock. Ten minutes before time for dismissal. Then she remembered that three sets of notices had been left on her desk. She hurriedly passed them to the children explaining their importance. She knew that many of them would never reach their destination.

After a good lunch and a walk in the spring sunshine the teacher returned to her classroom in a more optimistic mood. In order to solve some problems that had arisen the day before she introduced the children to some new work in arithmetic. The children were very eager to solve the new problems.

"This is fun," said Bill.

"I can do them easily now," Michael informed her.

This period didn't last long. The supervisor of art appeared and the problems were put aside. The art supervisor had no time schedule. He came when he chose and stayed as long as he liked. He stayed almost an hour, talking to the children about their art work on display in the room. He talked, too, about his own philosophy which showed that he knew very little about nine-year-old children.

The teacher listened and observed the children. Could she blame Timmie, Donald, and Susan for working on the problems they were eager to solve, while the supervisor talked?

When the supervisor left, without a word from the teacher, the children finished their work in problem-solving. Shall we say that the teacher and the children went home with some feeling of success that day?

Good teachers know that children grow and develop in a normal, healthy way in classrooms where the emotional atmosphere is friendly; where children and teacher are free from tensions, and where there is sympathy and understanding. To create such a classroom teachers must have time to live with their children and time to teach them.

Good teachers are guided in their work by the interests of their pupils. They are greatly disturbed when at the height of interest all activity must be dropped or set aside to allow some special teacher to teach her subject for twenty or thirty minutes. Special teachers know their *subjects* well but cannot make as great a contribution to the children as the teacher who knows her *children* well. Such interruptions make the work of the classroom teacher ineffective, break her time into short periods, put emphasis upon subject matter rather than upon areas of experience of which music, art, and dramatics should be an integrated part.

Another interruption which disturbs teachers is to have the children leave their classrooms for special lessons on orchestral instruments and piano while their regular work is in progress. Teachers approve these lessons but they also have goals which they cannot achieve without the children present.

A great amount of time is consumed collecting money, writing receipts, counting the money, and guarding it. In some schools the teacher's introduction to her children on the first day of school is by collecting fees from them. Collecting money continues all through the year, for as many as three funds at one time. Some of the funds are for worthy causes which have value for children but should be collected in some other manner.

No one but the classroom teacher could possibly be aware of the amount of time lost by explaining notices, passing them out, and collecting some that must be returned. Every day numerous announcements are sent to classrooms. The teacher must stop her work to read them, check her name on the list, and perhaps make note of the contents for future reference. Many of the notices sent home by the children never reach their destination.

However, there are some interruptions that are necessary and contribute to the good of the children. Physical check-ups, movies, assemblies, and excursions make fine contributions to the children and are important activities.

Some teachers have attempted to stop unnecessary interruptions by:

Formulating time schedules which permit children to take special subjects without interfering with class work.

Calling supervisors when they are needed rather than scheduling weekly visits.

Enlisting the help of parents in collecting fees on the first day of school, leaving the teacher free to greet the children.

Requesting the parent-teacher association to send some of its many notices to parents by mail instead of having them all handled in the classroom.

Teachers feel that more should be done to stop interruptions than they are able to do:

Superintendents, principals, and supervisors must become aware of the importance of the work of the teacher. They must understand that only when the teacher is able to do her work with a minimum of frustration and tenseness is it possible for her to create an emotional atmosphere in the classroom that is conducive to growth and development. This enlightenment should come through in-service training for administrators.

The whole supervisory program needs to be evaluated every few years to see if it is up-to-date and meets the needs of teachers and children.

In faculty meetings teachers should be encouraged to suggest to administrators better ways of handling many things that are now handled in classrooms.

—By RUTH HADDEN, *Evanston, Illinois.*

The Teacher's Time Belongs To the Children

WHATEVER ONE CAN SAY ABOUT TEACHING these days, it certainly is not hum-drum. One never knows what to expect from minute to minute during the day.

Many times after I have planned carefully for the day's work, an interruption will occur which will change the entire picture. Some interruptions are of definite value such as those to show an unusual flower, a pet, a peculiar rock or a butterfly. A child might have a contribution to make regarding a shooting star he had seen the night before or a flight of birds or the swarming of bees. Much learning can result from such unplanned situations. Some of the most successful activities one can have with children are those which arise spontaneously.

Often we receive an impromptu invitation to go to another room to see a puppet show, an informal dramatization or an exhibit. Such interruptions are very valuable.

Other interruptions from which definite teaching can result are fire drills, the visit of the school dentist for a routine examination, the request from the nurse to weigh and measure the children or to give immunization shots for diphtheria, the report of a traffic violation by a member of the safety squad or an announcement of a paper drive.

Many times an argument which has arisen during the gymnasium period or before school on the playground will carry over into the classroom. It might be necessary to take time from

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the planned work to talk the situation over and to settle it satisfactorily. Much valuable character education can result from pupil-teacher discussions at such times.

Some interruptions seem unavoidable, but they definitely disturb. Many times a child is given an emergency message from home which must be delivered before the child leaves school. Or perhaps a child is taken ill in the classroom and needs immediate care. With some illnesses it might be necessary to get the entire class out of the room for a short time.

Sometimes interruptions come from the office. Teachers are required to stop a lesson and give immediate attention to supplying information about a child or some other office detail. The interruption may create a restlessness among the children who have to wait for the teacher.

The teacher's time belongs to the children. It should not be diverted from them unless it is emergent and absolutely necessary. Many days there are so many interruptions from messengers popping into the room about one thing or another that it gets to be ridiculous. If these interruptions occur too frequently, the principal and faculty should work out a plan whereby they need not occur.

If there is a need for children to be called from the room in groups for some reason or another and after one group returns more have to leave, then it is well to provide an activity which will keep such interruptions from disconcerting the children who are left in the room. In such cases those who are in the room can work at the various centers, do committee work to plan some activity, have a story or play a game.

Many are the trials and tribulations of the classroom teachers but much of our success and happiness depend upon our ability to master the problem of interruption, to make profitable use of those which are inevitable, and to find a way to eliminate or to reduce to a minimum those which do not directly contribute to the activities of the classroom.—By ELIZABETH M. LORT, *Denver, Colorado.*

A Plan Could Be Worked Out

THE DAILY INTERRUPTIONS IN THE SCHOOL-room have three main sources: the parent, the student, and the administrative staff.

The interruptions that parents cause are not too disturbing for they arise so seldom. There

is, however, the parent who "sweeps" into the room with "Please see that my child goes home with Mary today; I will not be at home when school is dismissed"; or, "Will you please see that my child stays in at recess; it is too windy for him to be out."

Here are a few of the student interruptions:

You are working with some child who requires additional help. Suddenly the door opens, a child enters the room and asks, "Did anyone in here find a ring with a blue set in it?"

You have carefully built up the interest in some situation that has grown out of a happy experience in the room. The children are all eager to participate. Suddenly the door opens again. In walks a child with some object held high—a bracelet of the dime store variety, a jacket or a blue hair ribbon. "Did anybody in here lose this?"

Interruptions that come from the administrative source run like this:

You are about to reach the climax of a story to which some thirty-five eager children are listening. The door opens, someone walks in and hands you a long tedious note to read while he waits for your answer. Your listeners sigh; look at the intruder with unfriendly eyes; and yes, some brave individual will even say, "Oh shucks, please go on with the story."

You are surrounded by a group working hard to finish some particular project. Again the door opens, in walks someone with a vicious-looking report blank. You are told that the report must get into the school mail and that the truck will arrive in a very short time.

Not all interruptions annoy, however. Another group may have finished some work it wants to share. Perhaps some child has brought his pet to school or something of unusual interest. Interruptions to see the finished work or to observe the pet can be happy learning experiences.

Something could and I think should be done to minimize the number of interruptions that annoy. The teacher should be honest, frank and unafraid to protest them. If the administrator would see that all the teachers were informed of the dates on which reports, records and questionnaires were due the teachers could and I think would have all such material ready ahead of time. Bulletins sent to the classroom to be read while the messenger waits might rather be placed where teachers could see and read them at certain prescribed times of the day.

If the administrative staff and the classroom teacher had a frank discussion, a plan to reduce interruptions could be worked out. Surely, such a plan would be welcomed by all concerned.—By KATE BALLYEAT, *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

An Evaluation Must Be Made

"IF I ONLY HAD TIME TO TEACH" HAS become a familiar cry of the classroom teacher. Auditorium programs; magazine, rummage, and seed sales; paper drives; announcements; milk money; attendance, and clerical work increasingly interrupt our plan of work.

The teacher's job is to teach. Teaching means helping children profit by learning experiences. Not all of these experiences come from textbooks but from community resources, participation in programs, and working together.

Many teachers are accepting the challenge of these interruptions by turning them into useful experiences for the children and into new ways of teaching.

Participation in programs offers children an opportunity to gain poise and a feeling of satisfaction. Even the child who pulls the curtain for a group production is learning to work with others and often gains a feeling of satisfaction he might have missed in classroom routine. Programs may be merely culminating or special activities of teaching units. One school in Hammond, Indiana, has its weekly auditorium programs planned to show some part of the work being done in the classrooms. A speaker is shared with the other children only if he will be valuable to their experience.

Money-making projects consume so much time and energy that sometimes their value seems doubtful. However, funds from these same projects can provide visual education materials, record players, radios, and extra library books which enrich a child's day in such a way that time spent earning them is more than justified.

Until the time comes that cities, states, and the nation realize the importance of providing funds for proper equipment for adequate teaching, teachers will feel that they have to give of their time to help earn these things for children.

In some neighborhoods an interest is created in buying and reading good books and magazines through magazine and book sales projects.

Carnivals are dreaded when we think of the time required to prepare for them. Yet children may give vent to every creative talent in producing a good school carnival. In one school this gala event is arranged by the parents, teachers, and children for Hallowe'en Eve. The real value of this carnival is in more than the money received. The youngsters know that school is a place where they can have fun. They

are kept off the street, and neighborhood property goes unmolested on a night which traditionally brings much vandalism in all communities.

During the war the schools willingly gave of their time to collect waste paper. Now teachers feel that the confusion is great and the time ill-spent. Much of the confusion can be eliminated by organizing. A certain period in which to bring in paper, one central place in which to put it, assigned places from which to collect it, and designated helpers ease the strain and confusion. Teachers may work in pairs, alternating between helping with the checking and planning crafts, story hours, reading and dramatization for the children not participating or who finish early in the hour.

Out of organized waste-paper collections children learn order and cleanliness, respect for property and its owners, and to work together in a national effort. Teachers and children know that the time is well spent for the money is largely used for Junior Red Cross, films, records, and athletic equipment.

Middle-grade children enjoy collecting money for special funds and marking charts and lists for them. The teacher of very young children is handicapped for she cannot depend on their help. Moreover, the attention of the younger children is not so easily obtained or held after a distraction.¹

In the case of attendance, the teacher can well afford a few minutes at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions to mark absentees. State allocation of school funds is generally based upon daily attendance and the importance of a careful record merits the time of both teacher and children.

Every teacher feels the need of clerical help, especially when reports and details of book work take time needed in preparation for the children or for personal relaxation. In Hammond Public Schools one and one-half days are allowed at the close of each semester for teachers to complete records and to work in their rooms without the children present.

A program of orientation for the opening days of school has been in progress in Hammond the past few semesters. Children of all grades attend only short sessions the first day, allowing the teacher time for records, planning

¹ *Editor's Note:* Some teachers enlist the aid of older children thus providing important learnings and relationships for old and young.

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or conferences. Children who are entering first grade attend only morning sessions the first week. These youngsters do not become overtired and the teacher has time to meet her problems. Some time adjustment has been made for teachers to have parent conferences at school or to visit homes. The parent cooperation resulting from these conferences has solved many problems that formerly took the teacher's time.

Announcements may be filed in one central place and sent around in one notice; one place for lost and found inquiries will eliminate part of the parade that goes in and out of rooms. If children wish to share animals or materials with other rooms, it is most helpful if arrangement can be made before classes begin.

All too often at four o'clock we look over our plan for the day and find that we didn't cover the intended work. An evaluation must be made. Teachers and principals in individual schools need to think over the educational value of these things. Insofar as so-called interruptions have learning value and will really supplement and enrich the child's experiences, they may be accepted. Insofar as these interruptions distract the child's attention and block learning, the teacher should lend every effort toward abolishing them.—By MILDRED SNEED, *Hammond, Indiana*.

Required Work Must Be Carefully Planned

LIFE IS NO LONGER SIMPLE, QUIET, AND well-regulated as in the "good old days." It is beset with worries, trials, and often tribulations, with the high cost of living, wars, and disturbances throughout the world making it most complex. We find these things reflected in the children as they come into the schools today. They also carry over into our work as teachers, until it seems that each year teaching becomes more difficult.

We start the year with our work well outlined and planned. All goes along smoothly for the first few weeks, then the various drives start—P.T.A. membership, community chest, Junior Red Cross, Red Cross, football circus (sponsored by the P.T.A.), and paper drives. Yes, each is o. k.'d by the school authorities and each has its importance in our lives. But they do take time from what we have heretofore thought of as teaching. Yet with each of these drives, do we not teach?

P.T.A. membership drive gives us a chance to show how the school and the home work together and how each needs to be interested in the other.

With the community chest we go beyond the home into the life of our city, explaining the work of the organization, how it helps in our lives and those of our neighbors, and how it makes for a better city in which to live.

Reaching still farther a-field is the work of the Junior Red Cross and the Red Cross with the children in all parts of the world giving help to those in need.

Paper drives come a little closer to the child because they are usually used by the P.T.A. to earn money with which to buy something of benefit for the school, thus bringing pleasure and help to the children themselves.

Notices! Another interruption. These notices in many instances are necessary. Some days there seem to be veritable deluges of them. I can remember days when I have sent home as many as five or six notices about this, that or something else. I say I sent them home. At least they left my room. I had spent time explaining each. Some were of real importance but I fear their importance was lost because of the many going out at the same time.

Notices should be screened very carefully in the school office so that the teacher may handle only the most important, thus requiring the very minimum of time for handing out and explaining.

Then there are many hand-bills on varied subjects which we are required to distribute because through the schools many homes are reached. To me this is a waste of the teacher's time and energy which rightfully belongs to the children. To me the schools are not and should not be used as a distributing agency. Here again the school office should evaluate this material, taking into account the time element for handling it. As yet little has been done.

Nuisance interruptions are inter-school telephone messages, definitely necessary but used many times unnecessarily. I have had so many calls during one lesson that the children have said, "Let's start this lesson over again tomorrow."

Work in the cafeteria or special duties on the grounds have values for the children but because these children must leave the room early they are very disturbing interruptions.

Today's teacher cannot go into her class-

room with her boys and girls and close the door. That door is open. Many different activities and interests enter which are not included in the required curriculum. They come as interruptions and oftentimes as annoyances. But the teacher must meet them with as little outward show of frustration as possible and weave them into the day's work. The required work must be more carefully planned than ever before.—By GRACE POST, Pasadena, California.

It's the Attitude That Counts

AS THE SCHOOL TAKES OVER MORE AND MORE tasks for which the home and the community formerly were responsible, teachers get busier and busier. Yet some teachers have the ability to turn all annoyances into assets. Would that there were more such creative teachers!

We are fortunate in our school to be able to do something about most of the things we gripe about. Our principal encourages freedom of speech and freedom of action, as long as it is group action.

Last year, we upper grade teachers were plagued by children leaving school to go to the doctor, dentist or orthodontist; to attend music or dancing lessons or to attend religious instruction. In addition, we provided instrumental music lessons two days a week.

My room was like Grand Central Station, with someone always coming and going! I fussed, for a while. Then I got busy. I made a new kind of schedule, listing times when a child or children were gone from my room. I also listed the regular "specials." When I finished, even I was surprised to learn that my whole group was with me only one hour a week!

The rest is past history now: we re-scheduled all specials to allow a large uninterrupted block of time for each grade each day. We got the co-operation of some of the parents through P.T.A. publicity and through discouraging individual parents who wanted Johnny excused "when he won't miss anything important."

Our milk distribution, store, safety committee, and assembly chairmanship have interruptions all their own. Some of these can be used to educate. Some will always be annoyances. We must be alert to use each instance to the best advantage.

What school doesn't have pleasant, social-minded parents and even (dare I admit it?) teachers who choose the inopportune time to

drop in for a little chat? We have tried to discourage this type of interruption, as well as the more legitimate kinds, by having an "Interruption Period" the first fifteen minutes morning and afternoon. Announcements are to be made at that time.

But honestly, it's the state of mind, the attitude we bring to our work which determines how we use these interruptions. I dare you to sit on the beach in the sun, staring at the horizon, and try to remember those things which most annoyed you when you were tired! Let's all keep happy, and our problems will melt! —By BETTY WARNER, Scarsdale, New York.

"To Build Above the Deep Intent"

THE DAY BEGINS PEACEFULLY ENOUGH. FOR once every child has remembered to bring milk money into the room before the bell rings, and the teacher is pleased. But not for long.

Hearing a protracted jingle she asks in a clear voice, "Does anyone have milk money?"

No response. The teacher puts the milk money away and writes the required number of bottles on the attendance slip. The moment the slip is gone from the desk a small Someone stands beside the teacher. "You didn't ask for the milk money," he says, reproachfully, and lays four pennies on her desk.

With a sigh of resignation, the teacher takes out the milk money and makes the change on the slip which has been retrieved. Meanwhile the music teacher stands by, patiently waiting to begin her class.

Music over, the A Class is busy doing seat-work. The B's are searching out answers to questions which the teacher persists in asking.

"Why did the farmer's wife give the boys some hot tea?" is question number three on the list. The teacher reads it aloud and looks hopefully around at the class.

The door opens. "Did anyone lose a handkerchief?" asks a fresh young voice.

All heads turn toward the speaker. Blank looks are turned upon the handkerchief.

"Or this pencil?" More blank looks.

"Or this marble?" There is sudden interest among the boys. Four or five of them rush toward the marble after which there is a spirited argument as to the identity of the rightful owner. The most aggressive boy pockets it and everybody goes back to work.

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The teacher clears her throat. This time she gets as far as "Why did the farmer's wife give . . ."

"No codliver oil today." The door opens, the message is delivered, the door is closed—all with the precision of a cuckoo clock striking the hour. But it's an interruption, nevertheless.

Being an intrepid soul the teacher tries again. "Why did the farmer's . . .?"

The door again. Always it's the door. A shy little first-grader hesitates, half in the hall, half in the room.

"Come in," says the teacher, noticing his big, frightened eyes. Shy Buddy walks slowly to the front of the room, carefully holding a wriggling little puppy. Pride of ownership becomes evident as the pupils admire the little animal. Questions are asked that only shy Buddy can answer. Do we mind this? No. Anything that will give an uncertain child a glimmer of self-confidence is a legitimate interruption.

For the children, an unexpected surprise like the puppy makes the day one to remember.

Again the teacher raises her voice. "Why did the two boys give the farmer's wife some tea?" she asks in a rush. Before she has time to rectify her error the door opens and the kindergarten children shuffle into the room.

"This is the third grade," their teacher says, smiling.

Down go twenty-eight books. Up come twenty-eight inquisitive heads. There is much waving of hands and brightening of faces as friends and kin are recognized.

Another interruption but its purpose cannot be disregarded. The tour of the building will enable the little folk to know their way around among strange, awesome surroundings.

Alone once more. By this time the teacher has completely forgotten where she was in the story and it's recess time, anyway. Wearing a pained expression, the teacher follows the children out to the playground.

Are these interruptions typical of every teaching day? No, but the number of encroachments on teaching time is slowly and steadily mounting.

"Let's handle it through the schools," seems to be growing in favor with everybody but the teachers.

"Will you please announce this? It will take only a minute of your time." But it isn't merely a matter of making announcements! Hands have a way of going up immediately following

the announcements and minute by minute the teaching time ticks by. Finally, to stop the barrage of questions hurled in her direction, the harassed teacher announces harshly, "We will now take out our arithmetic books!"

Nor are announcements the only time-snatchers that thrust themselves into the teacher's working day. There are slips in ever-increasing numbers, representing drives of diverse interests and varying worth. To pass them out, to remind the children to have them signed by a parent, and to get them back on schedule is the teacher's responsibility and not one of her choice.

We know that children partaking in the Red Cross Drive are receiving valuable training in good citizenship. But must every undertaking be handled through the schools?

"But," we have heard, "that is the only way we can reach everybody."

Assuming, of course, that everybody is married. But everybody is not married. Furthermore, some married people have no children or, if they have, they may be beyond or below school age. These groups, then, would not be reached if the drive is handled through the schools.

Couldn't larger numbers be contacted via the newspaper or the radio? Nearly everyone reads the paper. Almost everybody has a radio. "But the busy mother hasn't time to listen to the radio." If you believe that, come to school on a day when your local station has announced, "There will be no school today." Nobody is in the building but the teachers and the custodian. Yes, the busy mother has heard, heeded, and notified the neighbor whose radio was out of commission.

No, we do not advocate following a rigid, inflexible classroom schedule. Deviations from the planned work, of which the school movie is an excellent example, we regard not only as helpful but often more informative and beneficial than the work we had scheduled.

Visits to the library, visits from the parents, visits of the nurse and doctor, and the occasional fire drill take their toll of class time, but they are necessary contributions to the emotional and physical well-being of the child.

And programs: If given occasionally, their benefits outweigh the disadvantages attendant to their preparation. Distracting? Yes. But they offer a training in responsibility, poise, and clear speaking that is not to be gainsaid. Furthermore, a part in "The Play" has more than

once transformed a timid, wavering child into a little person of quiet assurance.

Practice periods, if limited to two weeks of intensive preparation, will not borrow too heavily from the "Three R's" and the short period for rehearsals should not make the play burdensome to teacher or pupil.

The Christmas program we regard as a "must." It is a part of Christmas just as the singing of carols, the holly wreath, and the church service are a part of Christmas.

The child's education would be a monotonous experience, indeed, if it were not tempered with splashes of color which the movies, museum trips, and other such diversions provide.

What interruptions, then, shall we eliminate? Only those whose contribution is so negligible as to do little else but consume valuable teaching time. We have been hired, primarily, to teach. And that is precisely what we would like to do. As John Drinkwater said:

Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed.

—By MARTHA RAABE, *Sioux Falls, S. D.*

Contribution to Teacher Education

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE OCCASION WHEN a teacher-training professor wonders if she will have time to teach the eighteen-year-olds. The students have many extra-class activities. They spend much of their energy and many hours preparing for and taking tours for glee club, debate or dramatics clubs. But sometimes it is the little things that are the most exasperating. For instance, asking a question totally disregarding the well-made unit plans.

During a beginning course when apparently there was interest in the discussion, it was annoying to have Norma interrupt with this unrelated question, "What do you say when your friends poke fun at teaching?"

While some members of the class caught their breath in surprise, others chimed in with similar conversation difficulties and another group volunteered short, persuasive but general answers. At last they were anticipating situations and replies for upperclassmen, second semester freshmen, and for those expecting to enter college soon.

The class was so interested in discussing the question that more time was requested. They

wanted additional facts concerning the qualifications for teaching, the standards in different states, and opportunities in the profession. In a few days a bibliography of some length was compiled with each item recommended by a student. Not only did they read chapters in books but also professional magazines.

Four informal skits were written to tell the collected facts in an interesting manner. The class enjoyed them. Later it was learned that the more enthusiastic members of the class used some of the issues to persuade their friends to change their general course to education. The next semester the enrollment increased and the original class members were happy with their new and congenial classmates.

Interest continued so the skits were combined weeks later. The longer skit was called, "You'd Like Teaching." By request it was presented with costumes and stage properties for the teaching session of a career conference, "Fem's Futures." The coeds in a neighboring university who were puzzled over their courses gave attention to other students' reasons for choosing the teaching profession.

The real climax came the next month when they were invited to give a program on selective recruitment for high school seniors. The reaction was interest and questions from the young spectators, pride in the profession by the trainees, and a raising of the morale of women with years of teaching experience who witnessed the simple performance.

Thus an annoying experience—an off-the-subject question—became a learning situation. It meant disregarding the group's plan for a unit; it took time for their research and required patience while their creative writing was in process. But as the instructor of that class, I can report that it made a better contribution to teacher education than the routine unit or a series of lectures would have.—By ALMA LOIS RODGERS, *Lincoln, Nebraska.*

Take It and Make It the Best

JUST WHEN THE MOMENT IS RIGHT FOR explaining a technique in arithmetic, when errant attention is focused on a new word, when a new song is being presented, then come interruptions!

They come with annoying frequency—visiting mothers, lost or found articles, bulletins from the office, minutes from the classroom teachers' representative, children from other

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classes, announcements that the Brownies will or will not meet, the borrowing teacher, salesmen whose sole (?) purpose is to befriend teachers, drives of various organizations, the bell for changing classes! All these, and one more—the Junior highs coming in the spring to see their "old" teachers. Bless them in their adolescent superiority!

To a teacher meeting deadlines of thirty-three minute periods—apparently an unchangeable procedure—these interruptions *do* create annoyances! Some can be eliminated by faculty cooperation.

The office bulletin board can carry all announcements and reports. If any item is important enough for each teacher to have a copy for reference or study, the use of the school mimeograph will suffice.

Lost and found articles can be successfully handled through Girl Scout troops whose creed stresses service.

To insurance and magazine agents a special meeting can be given.

Even Brownies enjoy helping when shown the need for greater consideration of others.

And, surely a friendly and tactful request can get a borrowing co-worker to call at a more opportune time than during class hours!

But what of the interruptions which cannot personally be eliminated or administratively corrected? Use them!

The visiting mother comes because of interest in her child's progress and, if in her concern she forgets there are thirty-nine others in the teacher's care, she can be invited to a conference after school and to be a guest during that period. What little child is not proud to introduce his mother and to seat her comfortably? Think of the opportunity for practicing gracious living! Is not that more valuable than a new word, song or technique that can yet be learned? Even though Jim's mother is perturbed and a bit belligerent because of Jim's maladjustment, will she not be in a more understanding and pliant mood after having been treated as a welcome guest?

Just as children come to realize that the class is their school "family," so they need to recognize each family as a member of a wider group. Participating in whole-school activities and sharing in the work of other classes—skits, beautiful writing, a well-prepared story—will help them. Do not sigh or frown when a neighboring class comes to share its work. Use this short interruption to intensify the feeling

of being a part of the school community, an attitude of more pertinent value than the isolated fact they *might* have learned.

From the development of community interest, teachers look for ways by which to lead children into world consciousness, for today's children will be leaders in tomorrow's world, a world daily growing more interdependent. An understanding of and a concern about children in other lands have no finer opportunity for development than through the activities of the Junior Red Cross. It takes time to tell of life in other lands; to supervise the shopping for gifts, the packing of boxes but the awakening of interest in other peoples and the desire to help them have far deeper significance for children than a routine lesson, no matter how vitalized. Vitally important lessons will be learned when needed!

Other interruptions which usurp teaching time are the drives for financial aid by the March of Dimes, community chest, babies' milk fund and others. Shall we let them become nuisances or shall we utilize them in striving for our ultimate goal—a wholesome, worthwhile life for children? It is an old, trite saying that "it's love that makes the world go 'round," but if we can inculcate children with the feeling of concern over others' misfortunes and a willingness to share in the alleviation of them, we will be helping them to grow in the ability to love their fellowman.

There remains only the spring-time interruptions that try teachers' souls. At the end of their first junior high year it is natural that older students come back to display their new maturity to teachers who had always been interested in them. Use their brief visit to keep this ideal. It will pay dividends also with the listening "young fry."

To gather all these fragments into a unit would in reality be putting into words a philosophy of life as well as of teaching. The way in which one meets annoyances and overcomes obstacles indicates one's point of view. Since children learn more from example than from precept, it behooves us to meet teaching problems so that we will not have to say to them, "Do as I say, not as I do." Evaluate annoyances and put them to constructive use. Accept the adage that "whatever comes is for the best," not because it comes, but because we take it and MAKE it the best.—By PAULINE LAMB, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Overseas Teacher-Relief Fund

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION IS ENGAGED IN AN Overseas Teacher-Relief Fund campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to provide an opportunity for the teachers of this country to help immediately the teachers of war-devastated areas.

Every teacher in the nation is asked to give at least one dollar. As many as can are asked to give five, ten, or even one hundred dollars. Associations and groups of teachers are asked to transmit the funds collected locally to the state education association. The state associations will, in turn, transmit the money to the National Education Association.

The Executive Committee of the NEA will allocate the funds to regularly established, wellknown, reliable relief organizations such as Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE) and the American Red Cross which have facilities for rapid delivery to the devastated countries. The NEA will carry all administrative costs in its regular budget so that every dollar received will go to the teachers overseas.

This is to be a Thanksgiving-to-Christmas campaign but the need is so urgent that local associations were urged to complete their campaigns the first three days of Thanksgiving week. Early indications reveal a fine response to this appeal.

The plan for the campaign was developed by the Executive Committee of the NEA after consultation with officials of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO), the Commission on International Educational Reconstruction, (CIER), and of operative relief agencies such as CARE and the American Red Cross.

IN THE LONG STRUGGLE OF FREEDOM versus totalitarianism, there is perhaps nothing that could more surely tip the scales in behalf of democracy and peace than for the teachers of millions of children in the war-devastated countries to feel that the teachers of America are interested in their welfare.
—LYLE W. ASHBY, *assistant editor, "NEA Journal."*

●

A PEOPLE IS BUT THE ATTEMPT OF MANY
To rise to the completer life in one;
And those who live as models for the mass
Are singly of more value than they all.

—BROWNING in *Luria*

WOTP AND UNESCO

PERHAPS THERE CAN BE NO NEW THING UNDER THE SUN, BUT there may be new and interesting combinations of old elements. We have two examples in education for international understanding.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an association of some thirty governments working together to use education, science and culture to promote peace and security among the nations. UNESCO has just celebrated its first anniversary with a conference in Mexico City. At that conference reports of progress during its first year of work were made, and a program of operations for 1948 was approved. Bulking large in this program was a series of activities designed to help the member governments promote better teaching of international understanding. These activities include international efforts to improve textbooks, a study of the social tensions which are conducive to war and peace, and the continuance of international summer seminars for teachers.

A second new development in education is the World Organization of the Teaching Profession. WOTP, founded at Endicott, New York, in 1946, held its first general conference in Glasgow, Scotland, in August 1947. The World Organization of the Teaching Profession is to UNESCO as the NEA is to the United States Office of Education. The former is a voluntary association of teachers. The latter is an association at the governmental level.

WOTP is mobilizing the energies of teachers to encourage teacher and student exchanges and to make international studies which will result in better standards for the teaching profession and a more effective education for international understanding. Among the studies which will be conducted in 1948 are health education, literacy education, teacher exchanges, the teaching of languages, and current events instruction.

Individual teachers and teachers' organizations may join WOTP. As many as can should do this. Their membership, their ideas, and their financial resources will help the organization to succeed. It is the most promising effort, the last of a long series, to make it possible for teachers in every land to unite their efforts with their colleagues.

UNESCO AND WOTP ARE ENGAGED IN almost exactly parallel tasks, but the methods of approach differ because the structure and organization of the two agencies are different. The former rests on government and official authority; the latter on voluntary cooperation of individuals and private associations. Both are necessary in order to secure the ends sought.

In geometry, parallel lines can never cross or support each other, but in the organization of society parallel efforts may often supplement and constructively help each other.—W. G. C.

Good Will Toward All Men

A "non-exclusive holiday celebration by the whole public school community" is described by Chandler Montgomery, adviser in creative activities for the Winnetka, Illinois, public schools.

AT AN INFORMAL MEETING OF PARENTS and teachers at the Skokie Junior High School in 1945 the question of celebrating Christmas was discussed. For years the principal event has been our Christmas concert when we sang beautiful carols and anthems in the Christian tradition.

Our Jewish students had not objected. Many of them seemed to enjoy singing this music. Should a public school, responsible to all the children, recognize only the dominant culture.

We knew that some schools had had joint presentations of the Christmas story and Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. But this alone was not the kind of solution we sought. The winter holidays (Christmas to most of us) when stripped of commercial gadgetry were home holidays, days when families and friends gathered and took new strength from this association.

This idea set us off in a new direction: How do these winter holidays serve throughout the world to give hope and faith to families and communities?

Then came the practical question: Do we have the skill to realize such a theme in a community celebration?

We sought the professional advice of a radio script writer. He wisely suggested that such a program must grow gradually out of wide participation and that anyone not in daily contact with children would be unable to foster such growth.

We agreed, and formed a committee consisting of teachers and a group of parents. Aside from some planning and selection of songs by the music department, most of the preparation was done after Thanksgiving.

We Unify Effort and Symbolism

Last year the social studies department helped "set the stage" by sponsoring a study of *The Races of Mankind*.¹ A physician parent discussed and demonstrated blood differences and similarities. The social studies classes also carried out research on holiday customs and volunteered for many jobs.

Parents consulted various national groups in Chicago in search of talent and new information. The music department hunted far and wide for a great variety of holiday music—folk and religious—and for music which would convey the central theme of brotherhood, "peace on earth, good will to all men."

In English classes some students wrote on "what this Christmas means to me." Discussions among teachers and parents helped to uncover areas of concern, new hopes, new resolutions.

Meanwhile the dramatics teacher and the art teacher were exploring with student committees the possibilities of form—how to stage, connect, interpret all these separate parts into one experi-

¹ By Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish. Pamphlet No. 85. New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1943. Pp. 32.

ence. It was decided to express community effort rather than to present a "show" or production.

Plans were made for minimizing the separation between auditorium and stage. Elevations for the chorus of parents and children were extended from the forestage into the auditorium. Fir trees were banked about the auditorium to reinforce the unifying effect.

A large bulletin board in the front corridor of the school kept everyone informed of the developing plans. A large picture chart of the stage showed probable placement and movement of participants. The names of singers for each song, orchestra members (most of them parents), dancers, pantomimists, actors, stage crew, light men, visiting artists, costume helpers, printers, property makers, public address system operators, and others were listed. Wherever possible, rough sketches in colored chalks illustrated each scene. Though constantly subject to change the bulletin board helped to coordinate without repeated rehearsals the efforts of an increasing number of children, teachers, and parents.

The major job, involving nearly all of the children, was rehearsing the songs in choral groups. The children took some of the music home so that their parents, too, could learn it. Minimum rehearsals were held for the dancers, the "typical family," the boys in the Hanukkah ceremony, and those in the pantomime. The parents who assisted in the chorus rehearsed once, as did the orchestra. Some of the participants were never on the stage until the evening of the celebration.

What happened was a tribute to the effectiveness of a community working together. Here, briefly, is what took

place last year, differing in many ways from previous and future years.

The 1946 Celebration

After the orchestra played an overture of carols and theme music—"The Hymn of Freedom" by Thémán—the narrator at one side of the forestage introduced carolry by brief reference to ancient customs in the British Isles.

Costumed processions entered singing "The Boar's Head." A group of girls, costumed, danced with garlands to the music of "Deck the Hall" and "Holly and the Ivy." A final procession served wassail down the aisles as the "Wassail Song" was sung.

The "Old" Idea. The tiny forestage among the trees, occupied by "the family," was spotlighted. Mother and child talked about the Christmas cards they had received while father read the paper. A "benefit" card aroused some impatience in father who said that people were getting away from the old Christmas spirit. He described his boyhood experiences at his grandfather's in Vermont.

Attention reverted to the narrator who picked up the "old" idea by introducing a Hindu Swami. He chanted and translated a hymn five thousand years old, then introduced another Indian who played a native instrument.

The narrator's comment on the place of instrumental music in many cultures introduced two Chinese musicians. As the narrator recalled the history of the Jews' fight for religious freedom, two boys set up the traditional Hanukkah candelabra on the forestage and lighted the candles. The Jewish boy recited the blessings in Hebrew as his Gentile friend translated them. The cantor of the local temple sang a Hebrew hymn backstage.

In the next episode the narrator introduced the Fifteenth Century carol "A Babe is Born." While it was sung a tall stained glass window was revealed backstage. "O Magnum Mysterium," representing music of the Roman Catholic Church, was sung as a tableau of the Madonna and Child was added. A Negro tenor carried on the musical sequence by singing part of Handel's "Messiah" and, as the house lights came on, led community singing of several well-known carols.

The "Modern" Idea. The house lights dimmed again and spots were directed toward "the family." The father was disturbed by the



Tableau of the madonnas

disparity between the carols and the present-day world. In answer to the child's question about "the shepherds learning to play together," he replied, "It's not easy, learning to play together, son. Or to do *anything* together, for that matter."

In the following sequence girls in the balcony sang "Sleep, Baby, Sleep" while many madonnas—Spanish, Finnish, Dutch, African, Czech—were spotlighted here and there about the auditorium and among the banked fir trees. The narrator commented softly on the universal hope typified by the new-born babe.

"The family" reappeared and the father remarked that fathers, particularly today, understand the "no-place-in-the-inn" part of the Christmas story. When the child said, "All the kids I know have a place to live," his mother explained, "It's not just having a house; it's the feeling that you don't belong, that you're on the outside looking in." As the child recalled his experiences in strange communities during the war, attention was directed to a group under a street light singing the dissonant "Song of the Women."

Oh! It's hard work a-Christmasing, carolling,
When ye've eared the bailiff's 'and upon the latch. . . .

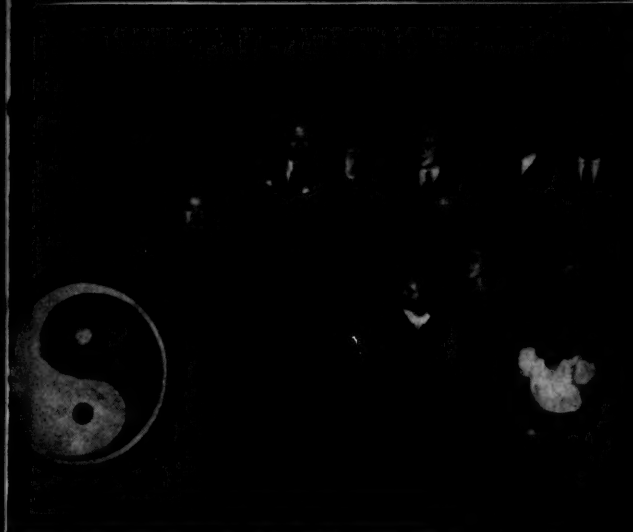
The carollers moved along and the end of a truck appeared. Another family—father,

mother and child-in-arms—got out. Without speaking they knocked at the door of one house but there was no answer. Shrouded, picket-like figures appeared in the shadows by the buildings. "Not In Our Neighborhood!" and "No Foreigners Here!" read their signs.

A crowd of people gathered around the truck. Then the door of one building opened. The landlord disregarding the lurking pickets beckoned the family to come in. When they entered, a crowd which had been gathering carried in furniture from the truck and the picket-spirits were swallowed up.

This scene blended quickly with the final one in which the stage filled with children, parents, and guests from other lands. Above their heads, backstage, a large terrestrial globe appeared. As the orchestra played "Hymn of Freedom" the crowd overflowed onto the fore-stage until the auditorium was one united group.

Students, teachers, and parents of Skokie Junior High School began in September to plan for their holiday festival. It will be different because it is 1947 but the central purpose will be the same—a non-exclusive holiday celebration by the whole public school community.

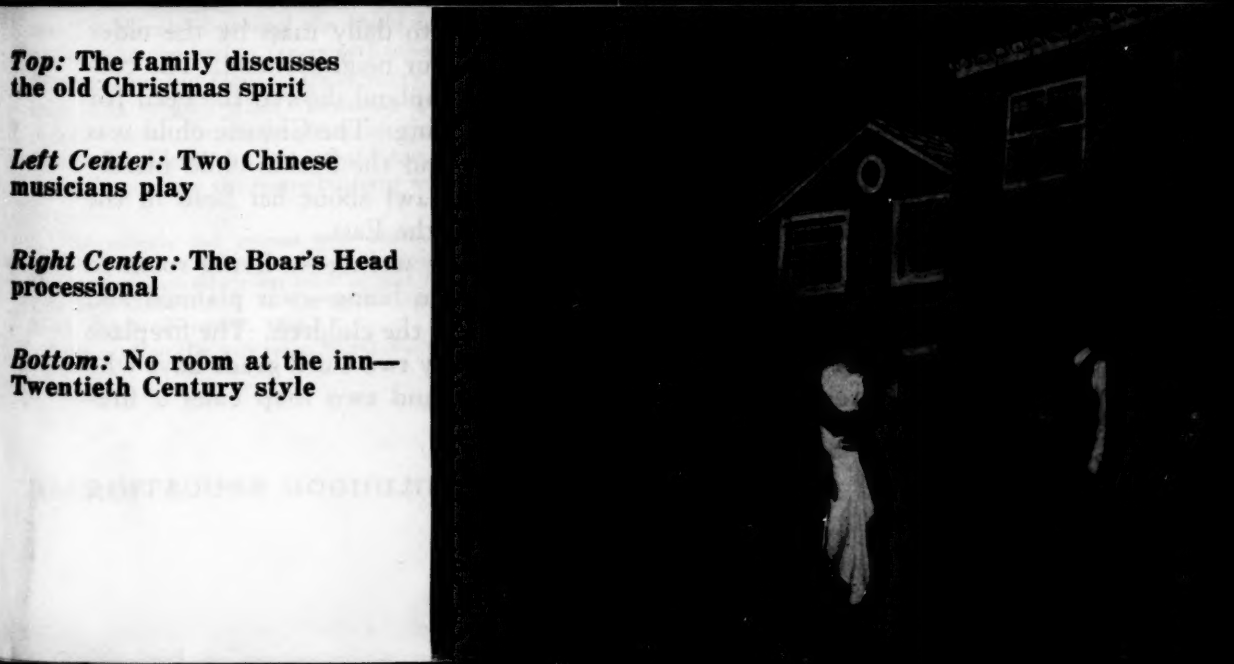


Top: The family discusses the old Christmas spirit

Left Center: Two Chinese musicians play

Right Center: The Boar's Head procession

Bottom: No room at the inn—Twentieth Century style



Christmas in One World

Children, parents, and teachers contribute from varied cultural backgrounds the materials for a Christmas program. Miss Espenlaub, principal of the Ingalls school, Kansas City, Kansas, tells how the new auditorium and new concepts of intercultural relations motivated the celebration.

JOHAN J. INGALLS SCHOOL IS LOCATED in the industrial district. About sixty per cent of the parents of the children are foreign born, principally Mexican, Greek, Italian and Russian.

A new school auditorium has been the source of great civic pride among the children and parents. What should we do to celebrate its completion? The Christmas program—the first big school event of the year for the patrons—supplied the answer.

In keeping with the pride in the auditorium it was decided that the Christmas program should be the product of the parents, children, and teachers. Art and social studies the past year had emphasized the idea of One World and world understanding. The many cultural backgrounds of our school community seemed to offer rich resources.

With these ideas and concepts in mind a committee was appointed to plan the program. The Christmas committee interviewed children from Russian and Italian homes. The children talked to their parents and with the information gathered from these sources wrote the parts for these countries.

A group of Mexican fifth and sixth grade children pooled their information about the los posadas, wrote the story together, and planned the processional for the Mexican part.

The minister of the Greek Orthodox church helped his eight-year-old son

plan the Greek Christmas celebration. The son wrote the story in Greek, translated it into English, and with suggestions and additions made by other Greek children this part of the program was ready.

For countries not represented in the community, teachers and pupils together and separately worked out the Christmas customs, stressing those which have become a part of our own Christmas celebration. Considerable research was done to obtain appropriate music.

Costuming stressed the likenesses of children's clothes to our own clothes. Representatives of France, England, Germany, Holland, Russia, Italy, and Greece were not costumed because the people in these countries wear costumes only for certain kinds of festivals. A white summer suit sufficed for a Brazilian costume.

Mexican children added only the rebozo worn to daily mass by the older women in our neighborhood. The costume for Lapland showed the need for warm clothing. The Chinese child was costumed and the Syrian child merely pinned a shawl about her head in the fashion of the East.

The stage setting—a living room in an American home—was planned and arranged by the children. The fireplace was made by two third grade boys who tacked around two map cases a fire-

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¹ The
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² Editor

place drawn in colored chalk. Third and fourth grade children had made hand-dipped candles and holders which were added to the fireplace. A group of sixth grade children gathered suitable furniture from all parts of the building to complete the home effect.

A large Christmas tree trimmed with decorations the children had made stood at one side. The kindergarten, third, and fourth grades decorated other Christmas trees to stand on each side of the school choir. Christmas tree lights were the only commercial decorations used.

The auditorium, remodeled from two classrooms, contained blackboards not yet covered. The fifth and sixth grade children covered the boards with chalk murals illustrating Christmas carols. All other building decorations were planned and made by the children. The last week before vacation the children went daily to the auditorium, turned on all the Christmas tree lights, and enjoyed their songs and stories.

A Synopsis of the Program

The prologue¹ took place in an American home on Christmas Eve. The mother and children talked about waiting for Santa and wondered what children in other countries do on Christmas Eve.

The mother says: "Christmas is like the sun. It shines all around the world for everybody. The children in far-away Russia, Greece, Norway, Syria or Holland are as merry as American boys or girls when Christmas comes.² If it hadn't been for the people across the sea who first kept Christmas, we would not have in our own country the many customs which help

to make this such a happy season. We have few customs of our own."

The children retired and one child slipped back to catch Santa. He fell asleep and the children of the world came to tell of their Christmas customs.

Some countries were represented by one or two children while entire grades represented others. The speakers for each country used the stage while the rest of the group stood just below to sing songs of that country. The choir sang other songs typical of the country as each group moved in and out of the auditorium.

The Mexican children in the posadas processional with the aid of kindergarten children built a crèche. This group was followed by the French children who sang "Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" as the crèche was lighted.

The child waiting to catch Santa was awakened by his mother. He told her of his wonderful dream of these children from other lands. The mother replied:

I'm glad that you had that kind of a dream. In order to have peace among the people of the world, it is necessary that people like each other. To like each other, they must understand each other. To understand each other, they must know each other.

As the world grows smaller and smaller, the nearer we come to our goal of peace on earth. In a small world, the white, the black, and the yellow—the people of all colors and creeds—become neighbors, neighbors that will learn to understand, love, and appreciate each other as we do the neighbors in our own communities.

This year when we are saying "Merry Christmas" to our friends in America shall we not widen our circle to include the children of other lands, saying with Tiny Tim "God bless us, everyone."

The choir concluded the program by singing "O Come, Little Children" while the children from all the countries joined hands with the mother and child about the lighted crèche.

The program was attended by the largest crowd at any school function in the past five years. The patrons enjoyed it because they had helped. The children were sure it was the best program that we have ever given because each child from the kindergarten through the sixth grades felt that it was his very own. Time alone will reveal how meaningful the concept of One World has become.

¹ The prologue and epilogue were written by Gwen McNaughton, intermediate teacher in the Ingalls School. The mother's last speech was taken in part from "Let's Like Each Other" by B. A. Lin in *Air Age Education News*, October-November, 1946.

² Editor's Note: Or were before World War II.

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Books FOR TEACHERS . . .

PLAY THERAPY. By Virginia Mae Axline.
*Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. Pp. 374.
\$3.50.*

This book tells what play therapy is, how it can be used to release children's creative forces, and describes its use with maladjusted children.

Play therapy may be directive in form with the therapist assuming responsibility for guidance and interpretation, or it may be non-directive. Non-directive play therapy works upon the theory that the individual has within himself the ability to solve his own problems. It starts where the individual is and allows him to go on from there.

The reading of this book will stimulate many questions. One of the most important is, "How can we as teachers and parents see and use the resources of personality which exist in each child?"

The book is deep, thoughtful, penetrating. It should be especially helpful to teachers and parents.—DORIS D. KLAUSSEN, *principal, Ann J. Kellogg School, Battle Creek, Michigan.*

HOW THE UNITED NATIONS WORKS.

By Thomas Galt. Illustrated by Norman Tate. *New York: The Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Pp. 218. \$2.*

How the United Nations Works is a timely book. In simple language it describes the entire organization—the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Court, the Secretariat. "The author brings the activities of the United Nations right into the everyday life of the reader and shows how everyone is affected by these doings," summarizes a comment on the book jacket.

The book is divided into four sections: Where the Organization Began; a Guide to the Organization; How the Organization Meets Trouble; Facts and Documents. There is also a chapter on the amending process. The clever illustrations by Norman Tate supplement and explain the text.

Tom Galt, the author, is well fitted to write such a book. He has been a teacher and librarian at the Ethical Culture School. He has

been writing and lecturing on economics and international relations. He has traveled in Europe and Mexico and written several pamphlets for the Pan American Union.

This is a good book for all of us. It makes the United Nations mean more than mere words.—DORIS D. KLAUSSEN, *principal, Ann J. Kellogg School, Battle Creek, Michigan.*

THE PERSONALITY OF THE PRESCHOOL CHILD. The Child's Search for His Self.

By Werner Wolff. *New York: Grune and Stratton. Pp. 341. \$5.*

Werner Wolff has answered the question often asked by educators, "What can we learn about a child through his drawings?"

The author has assembled the drawings of many children, recorded the conversations accompanying their work, and carefully analyzed them. Thus the theory of the book that "a child puts in graphic form the situation he is trying to clarify" is well supported.

The three divisions of the book—Observations, Experimentations and Theory—help us to maintain a good balance when probing the phases of growth necessary for personality studies.

Mr. Wolff, drawing upon children's conversations and graphic expressions, gives us the chance to view the effect of family relationships and such problems as birth and death upon the growing personality. He tells us that "the child's personality, especially his social behavior, is patterned by the parent's attitude"; that a child frustrated in his explorations of the mind may develop unwholesome symptoms. Mr. Wolff parallels Rabbi Liebman's thought, "The whole process of concealment can prove to be devastating to a child's emotional development."

Again, we think along parallel lines in this study when the value of the intelligence quotient and the rhythm quotient of the preschool child are carefully compared. The emphasis on the importance of the rhythm quotient which represents spheres of a child's personality that are neither learned or trained opens a new area of study.

Throughout the book the technique in interpreting graphic expression prepares one to penetrate the depths of the child's structure.

We find a complete summation of the value of children's graphic descriptions in the author's words, "The adult's art is guided by his impressions; the child's by his expressions. If we permit the child a structure of his own the relationship between child and adult changes completely." Here we approach the personality of the preschool child by experimental depth psychology, using varied rather than isolated means to understand the unity of personality.

This volume is a *must* for those who live and work with small children.—ALICE M. MEEKER, instructor in education, State Teachers College, Paterson, N. J.

BRINGING UP CHILDREN. By Dorry Metcalf. New York: Pilot Press. Pp. 120. \$2.

It would be difficult to overestimate the comfort and reassurance this book will provide a seasoned mother of several children. The many practical, sensible suggestions back up what successful mothers have long been practicing in the rearing of children.

For the brand new mothers who are inexperienced, anxious and uncertain about how to deal with their offspring, this book will prove a sure tonic and a real help.

Dorry Metcalf brings children through the everyday problems of growing up—feeding, weaning, toilet training, and training for independence. In very clear and attractive style she cites numerous examples of ways to live with children so that they will grow to be "happy, interesting, self-reliant and constructive human beings."

Especially helpful will be the sections dealing with acquiring a conscience, learning to be obedient and self-reliant, allowing children to make decisions, looking after one's own property.

It is very gratifying to find this author stressing the unevenness of the nature of growth in individuals and pointing out the importance of respecting a child's own pace and rhythm in developing. Parents and teachers who work with children have daily examples of this individual variation. Mrs. Metcalf strengthens our point of view.

This book may well be added to that growing list designed to help all of us who deal with children to be more intelligent and understanding regarding them.—BEATRICE HURLEY.

PLAYMAKING WITH CHILDREN. From Kindergarten to High School. By Winifred Ward. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. Pp. 312. \$2.50.

Those of us who have known and used Winifred Ward's earlier books dealing with dramatics for children welcome her new book *Playmaking With Children*. As we read this book our faith in the creative aspects of teaching boys and girls comes alive anew. It is refreshing to reflect on the valuable ways children develop through genuinely creative experiences of playmaking.

We like the distinction she makes between playmaking which is truly a creative experience in dramatics and a formal play which is an experience in creative writing. The reviewer believes this is a significant point to be made. Far too often plays are so minutely directed by teachers and lines are so carefully rehearsed by children that all vestige of creativity has vanished before the final performance is scheduled.

Chapter two deals with playmaking's contribution to the education of boys and girls by way of furnishing real opportunities for them to think independently, cooperate on vital problems, become sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others, and grow in emotional control as well as mental and physical efficiency.

The chapters entitled "Rhythm and Dramatic Play," "Choosing Stories to Dramatize," "Story Dramatization" and "The Written Dramatization" contain many practical suggestions to teachers who are eager to learn ways to help children with dramatic enterprises.

Chapter eight contains the play "The Sandalwood Box" as adapted from "The Legend of the Moor's Legacy" in Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra*. The play was written for the Children's Theatre of Evanston, Illinois.

The reviewer read with real interest chapter ten which deals with "Playmaking and Therapy." We hope that many teachers will examine the values cited in this chapter, and give their children rich opportunities to profit by their playmaking.

The author includes two helpful bibliographies. One will be useful for supplementary reading on the philosophy of creative drama. The other is a list of books and stories which have been loved and frequently dramatized by children.—BEATRICE J. HURLEY.

Research ABSTRACTS . . .

DIFFERENCES IN PARENT BEHAVIOR TOWARD THREE- AND NINE-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN. By Alfred L. Baldwin. *Journal of Personality*, December 1946, 15: 143-165.

An attempt is made to explore the differences between the parent behavior toward three-year-old and nine-year-old children. The Fels Parent Behavior Rating Scales were used. Ratings were made for eleven different visits to the homes of one hundred fifty-three children. Half of the children rated were between thirty and forty-two months and the other half between one hundred three and one hundred fourteen months. Statistical data are handled carefully.

The results of this study hold special interest for the teacher of the young child. Parent behavior is revealed to be colder, less intellectually stimulating, and more restrictive toward nine-year-olds than toward three-year-olds.

There are several noted general changes in the parental attitudes of the two groups, explainable in part by the general growth of independence during these ages and the change in cultural standards which influence treatment of children of various ages. Nevertheless, many of the changes in parental attitudes and behavioral patterns superimpose real changes upon the world in which the child lives, and thus in the impact upon him from home and society.

Baldwin also identified three special groups of parents whose pattern of age changes deviated from the typical. One group was comprised of those parents who put an unduly high value on school achievement; another was low on babying, low on protectiveness but high on solicitousness; a third group was labeled the "coaxers." All phases of Baldwin's attempts to describe the parent-child relationship may be considered vital to a teacher's understanding of children within the age span studied.

If one adds to this labeling of parental behavior the like possibility of labeling teacher behavior, the implications for small children are multiplied many times over. It takes rare insight on the part of the teacher to make decisions as to whether her treatment of the individual child should complement or be con-

sistent with the home pattern. It is deceiving to speak of parental behavior in a group way or to think of the role of teachers as a group. Therefore, to interpret Baldwin's study realistically, and to get suggestions from it which will operate dynamically the teacher must think of the parent-child relationship of each child and map her schoolroom course therefrom.

The three-year-old who comes from a home where there is a high degree of warmth, sufficient intellectual stimulation, and too little restriction presents one sort of problem at school. The nine-year-old who feels his home lacks warmth, who has too little intellectual stimulation, and who feels too much restriction presents a different set of problems. If the teacher can learn from Baldwin's generalizations and still make sound *individual* interpretations based upon *specific* child needs, she will profit significantly from reading the complete study.—ELIZABETH M. FULLER.

A PERSONALITY FOLLOW-UP OF SHIRLEY'S TWENTY-FIVE BABIES. By Patricia Neilon. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1946. *Unpublished Thesis*.

The personality development of sixteen of the twenty-five adolescents studied intensively by Shirley when they were babies is the subject of Miss Neilon's thesis.¹ She prepared personality sketches which were to be matched with Miss Shirley's original ones but did not consult the original sketches until after her sketches of the seventeen-year-olds had been written. The group was from upper socio-economic levels and above average in intelligence and adjustment.

The subjects were given the Goodenough *Speed of Association Test* and the Rundquist-Sletto *Minnesota: Survey of Opinions*. Interviews were held with the subjects and with each of their mothers who rated her child on twenty-three traits and six special abilities. Rating scales and special ability scales were mailed to

¹ Shirley, Mary M. *The First Two Years: A Study of Twenty-five Babies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1933. Vol. I-III. Miss Neilon's study will be published in the forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Genetics*.

the fathers. All of these objective data were interpreted in the light of the interviews with the subjects and mothers. Miss Neilon then wrote the personality sketches. Sketches of the five girls were matched by ten judges, and five judges matched the sketches of the boys. Individual judges' scores and the mean scores of all judges were significant as compared to chance.

Miss Neilon concluded:

Personality similarities in an individual persist over a period of time.

Some individuals are more readily identifiable after a period of time, presumably due to greater uniqueness of personality pattern.

The matching technique, utilizing total impression, allows for the demonstration of similarities in personality pattern in the same individual over a period of time.

The teacher of young children who has often wondered what "her children" would be like as they grow up will be interested in reading this study. The teacher who is concerned about certain mannerisms can take heart from Miss Neilon's findings. Future work on the study of personality may isolate those traits which are teachable and the extent to which they are. A follow-up of Shirley's twenty-five babies at the adult level would afford a picture of the entire personality development of this group of individuals.—L. HELEN WALTERS, *University of Minnesota*.

THE RELATION OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY TO CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES. By Marian Radke. *Institute of Child Welfare Monograph No. 22.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1946. Pp. 136.

Subjects in this study were forty-three University of Minnesota nursery school and kindergarten children and their parents. All were urban children from professional and semi-professional homes. Data from parents were obtained by interviews with both parents together and by questionnaires filled out by parents independently, in the presence of the interviewer.

Data from the children were secured by (1) picture and doll-play projective situations, illustrating home experiences; (2) a series of experimental situations measuring the child's reactions to various types of adult authority, and (3) a questionnaire-interview designed to reveal the child's perception of and reaction to his and his parents' roles in the home. Preschool teachers contributed ratings of the child's behavior in the preschool.

From the data, the structure of the home authority and discipline was studied. Comparison of the parents' view of relationships to their own parents with their relationships as parents to their own children show that from the grandparent to the parent generation there has been a decrease in the authoritarian pattern of parents and an increase in the equality status of the child in the family, at least in the view of the parents' reporting. Generally speaking, the parent presented the disciplinary practices of the home in a more "favorable" light than the child reported them. The child's concept of mother and father is determined by the work the parent does. His concepts of goodness or badness in children are determined primarily by the parental approval or disapproval the behavior brings. The mother is more important than the father in determining the child's behavior values. Mothers punish more frequently, fathers more severely. Parents are generally rather stereotyped in disciplinary methods, and given to constructive forms.

Children from freedom-giving, democratic atmospheres are characterized as popular, rivalrous, active, colorful. Children from restrictive homes are designated as non-rivalrous, passive, unpopular. There is evidence that in relationships with other children a youngster utilizes behavior forms exhibited by his parents.

In experimental authority situations, children having good rapport with parents are freer to assert themselves than children who are fearful or not closely related to their parents.

In general, implications for educators are these: The parents of this study, although educated and economically favored, need guidance in the "management" of children. They fail to recognize that the child is entitled to respectful treatment, and frequently regard his ego-needs as trivial. Probably parents of less favored economic and educational background need as much or more guidance. In two generations studied, the receiver of discipline perceived it to be more severe and less reasonable than the giver. Role differences appear to bring differences in social perception; this finding may explain many inter-personal and inter-group misunderstandings and maladjustments.

This research study also suggests the importance of family experiences of the young child in establishing his basic patterns of social behavior.—DALE B. HARRIS, *Institute of Child Welfare, University of Minnesota*.

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By MARY E. LEEPER

News HERE AND THERE . . .

New A.C.E. Branches

South Ward Association for Childhood Education, Arkansas
Whitley County Association for Childhood Education, Indiana
Dowagiac Association for Childhood Education, Michigan
Jordan School District Association for Childhood Education, Utah

Reinstated

Cannon County Association for Childhood Education, Tennessee

State Association

Mississippi Association for Childhood Education

Changes

Alice E. Carter, from New York City to Teachers College, Farmville, Virginia.

Christine Heinig, following the resignation of Harriet Ahlers Houdlette, becomes associate in childhood education on the staff of the American Association of University Women, Washington, D. C.

Bertha V. Leifeste, from Arizona State College, Tempe, Arizona, to National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois.

Minnie Lee Rowland, from Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, to consultant in elementary education, State Department of Education, Columbia, South Carolina.

Althea Smith, Neodesha, Kansas, to principal, Hockaday School, Dallas, Texas.

Esther B. Starks, public schools, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to critic teacher of kindergarten and assistant professor of education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Marion K. Wood, from public schools, Eveleth, Minnesota, to director, Oak Park and River Forest Day Nursery School, Oak Park, Illinois.

A.C.E. Observer at Mexico City

Winifred Bain, president of the Association for Childhood Education was in Mexico City during November attending the meetings of UNESCO. Miss Bain served as an observer for the Association at the suggestion of the Department of State.

Modern School Practices in the U.S.A.

To answer many requests for current information about children's school experiences in this country, the Association for Childhood Education has issued a twenty-four-page picture booklet, *Modern School Practices in the U.S.A.*

School experiences of children from two to

twelve years of age are portrayed. They are shown studying the world we live in, using modern play equipment, investigating community resources.

Such activities as gardening, painting, cooking, singing, and listening to music are pictured. Attention is given to child study, parent education, and teacher preparation.

Captions for each group of illustrations are printed in six languages—Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish and English.

It is hoped that since pictures can be understood in any language, this booklet will help children all over the world to have more of the kinds of experiences shown—experiences that contribute directly to children's development as democratic citizens.

The photographs were contributed by fifteen public and private schools and were selected by a committee of ten attending the study class on "School Practices That Make Growth Possible" at the Annual Study Conference of the Association for Childhood Education in Oklahoma City in April, 1947. The initial production cost was met from the Expansion Service Fund of the A.C.E.

Educators throughout the United States are being invited to "buy one and send one"; that is, to purchase two copies of the booklet, one to lend to friends at home and one to send to a teacher in another country. The Association will supply on request the names of teachers in other countries.

Modern School Practices in the U.S.A. contains twenty-four pages and cover, is priced at \$1 per copy, and may be ordered from the Association for Childhood Education, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Childhood Education Conference

During the 1948 convention of the American Association of School Administrators at Atlantic City, New Jersey, a luncheon conference will be held for those with a special interest in childhood education. This conference luncheon will be sponsored jointly by the National Association of Nursery Education and the Association for Childhood Education.

Winifred E. Bain, president of A.C.E., will preside. Bess Goodykoontz of the U. S. Office

of Education will speak on "New Developments in the Education of Children." Informal discussion will follow. All are welcome.

The date is Wednesday, February 25; the place, the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Atlantic City. Tickets may be secured that week from the convention office, Atlantic City Auditorium.

A.C.E. Executive Board Meeting

The fall planning meeting of the Executive Board of the Association for Childhood Education was held in Washington, D. C., November 28, 29 and 30. Committee reports and business affairs were reviewed; plans for the 1948 study conference were completed; plans for future publications and activities were outlined. Winifred E. Bain, president, presided at all sessions.

Copies of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION Needed Abroad

The desperate and continued need for American publications to serve as tools of physical and intellectual reconstruction abroad has been made vividly apparent by appeals from men of learning in many lands, and from Americans who have seen this need. The American Book Center for War Devastated Libraries has, in the past year and a half, shipped nearly 1,000,000 volumes of highly selected books and periodicals abroad.

The Book Center, continuing its program through 1947, is making a renewed appeal for donations of books and periodicals, for publications of intellectual merit in all fields, and particularly for volumes published in the last ten years. Of special value are complete or incomplete files of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. Such donations to this program will help in the reconstruction which much preface world understanding and peace.

Ship contributions to the American Book Center, c/o The Library of Congress, Washington 25, D. C., freight prepaid, or write to the Book Center for further information.

Kindergartens in Hawaii

The rapid development of new kindergartens in Hawaii is shown in a recent report by Mary Musgrove, director of the kindergarten program in the public schools in the Territory of Hawaii.

From 1943 through 1946, sixty-four kindergartens were established in thirty-seven schools.

Action by the 1947 Legislature provided for the establishment of thirty-eight new kindergartens in twenty-nine schools in September, 1947, and thirty-six new kindergartens in twenty-three schools in September, 1948.

Action by the commissioners of public instruction limits the size of kindergarten classes to twenty-five children and recommends the standard of thirty-five square feet per child.

National Commission on Children and Youth

The annual meeting of the National Commission on Children and Youth will be held in Washington, D. C., January 28, 29 and 30. The one hundred members represent all sections of the country and are chosen because of their concern for the welfare of children and youth.

International School for Children

A nursery school has recently been established at Lake Success, New York, for the children of the delegates and members of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Lea Cowles has been granted leave of absence from the University of Alabama to serve as director of this international school for children.

Trailer Museums

A traveling art exhibit, sponsored by the Children's Museum of Washington, D. C., made a recent 3,350-mile tour, visiting Quebec and eighteen cities in eight states. In Quebec, it was exhibited at the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums. In the eighteen cities, it was inspected by museum directors who plan to use highway museums in their own areas.

The highway museum, twenty-seven feet long and eight feet wide, is showing that art displays need not be limited to large cities. Painting, sculpture, photography, industrial design, and other arts may be taken to people in small towns and rural areas by highway.

The museum is now rolling through various sections of the nation's capital and its suburbs, and will later visit numerous cities which have requested a look at the museum on wheels.

When a new home for the Children's Museum of Washington is established, the director, Matilda Young, hopes to use trailer coaches as mobile branches which will permit exhibits

(Continued on page 198)



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Warm, humorous stories with dramatic incidents within the child's experience open new worlds of information. Of such is *The Little Fisherman* with its deep sea fishing detail.

Large, clear reading type makes *Hurry, Hurry: The Story of a Hurrier* more than good recreational reading. It is comfortable easy-reading experience at a time when the young reader can be very easily discouraged.

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Let's Find Out: A First Picture Science Book and Now Try This: Second Picture Science Book are skillful and accurate presentations on an elementary level. Lively illustrations and simple language add to the enjoyment of the child who is ready for information about the workings of the world around him. The same simplicity went into *Anywhere in the World: A Story of Plant and Animal Adaptation*.

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News Notes

(Continued from page 196)

to be moved from one school and playground to another in the community.

A traveling trailside museum is now being operated by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in a converted trailer. It furnishes additional exhibits to park museums.

The British National Gallery has established mobile museums to make art exhibits available to people in Wales.

Pan American Child Congress

The ninth Pan American Child Congress will convene in Caracas, Venezuela, January 5-10, 1948. Elizabeth Shirley Enochs, director of the Inter-American Cooperation Service of the Children's Bureau, is active in the preparations for the conference.

Child Labor Activities in Federal Government

The National Child Labor Committee, with headquarters in New York City, recently issued a memorandum showing how serious the situation is in regard to federal child labor activities. The following statements are quoted from the memorandum:

Prior to July, 1946, all federal child labor work was in the Industrial Division of the Children's Bureau. This program included enforcement of the child labor provisions of the Wage-Hour Act (except for regular inspections which were made by the Wage-Hour Division); an age certification program to assist in the administration of both federal and state child labor laws; research on hazardous occupations and other problems on which the Children's Bureau exercised discretionary powers under the Wage-Hour Act; general research into child labor and youth employment problems; consultation service for state and local administrative agencies; advisory and promotional services on state child labor standards and legislation; research, advisory and promotional services on agricultural problems involving child workers; and informational, statistical and public relations' services.

In the summer of 1946, when the Children's Bureau was transferred to the Federal Security Agency, the activities of its Industrial Division remained in the Labor Department. They were incorporated—in toto, with per-

(Continued on page 200)

A READING FROLIC



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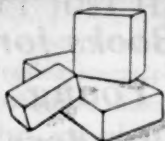
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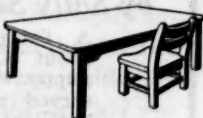
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News Notes

(Continued from page 198)

sonnel intact—as a *Child Labor and Youth Employment Branch* in the Division of Labor Standards, under the direction of Beatrice McConnell, who had been director of the Industrial Division since 1935.

Action by the last Congress through the Appropriation Act shattered this pattern of work. Appropriations have been reduced radically, the Child Labor and Youth Employment Branch of the Division of Labor Standards has ceased to exist, and its functions have been transferred and dispersed.

The law enforcement functions of the Child Labor and Youth Employment Branch were transferred to the Wage-Hour Division.

Other child labor functions under the Fair Labor Standards Act were also transferred to the Wage-Hour Division and, by order of the Secretary of Labor, have been set up, for one year, as a Child Labor Branch.

No provision was made for the continuance of promotional child labor work. The Division of Labor Standards, however, has set up a new unit on *Federal-State Cooperation* and Miss McConnell has remained with the Division of Labor Standards to head this work.

There is also in the Division of Labor Standards a unit on *Legislative Standards*. Its work includes the analysis of labor laws, pending bills, etc., and child labor will probably be covered along with other labor legislation.

With the reduced appropriations, programs have necessarily been curtailed and the staff drastically reduced.

Teacher Education in Connecticut

A joint statement from the Connecticut state and Yale departments of education announces the establishment of a plan for enabling teachers to win the master of education degree by working at both the New Haven State Teachers College and Yale.

Special procedures which will be encouraged on a cooperative basis under the terms of the new plan include:

Research by individuals or groups on problems related to teacher education, child growth and development, teaching procedures, and so on.

Development and demonstration of good school practices.

Systematic study and utilization of resources of the Teachers College, Yale University, and the State Department of Education for the improvement of pre-service and in-service education of teachers.

Participation of graduate students preparing for teacher education in the program of the Teachers College.

The administration of the new program will be carried out jointly by the State Department of Education and the Department of Education at Yale.

The plan is effective immediately and marks the first step in implementing this "cooperative working arrangement."